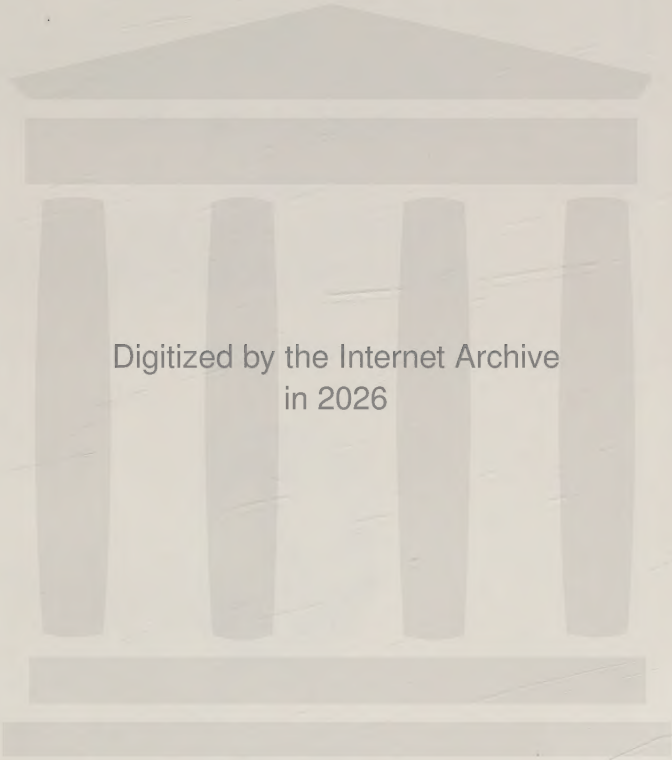
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THE
LIFE OF CHRIST

By

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Bishop of La Rochelle, France

Translated by

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Priest of the Diocese of Springfield

VOLUME II

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE CHARTER OF THE NEW LAW

THE CHURCH, ONCE ORGANISED, MUST BE INSTRUCTED —THE MOUNT OF THE BEATITUDES—THE AUDITORY —THE SERMON TREATS OF THE THREE GREAT QUESTIONS: HAPPINESS, JUSTICE, AND WISDOM—WHO ARE THE HAPPY, AND WHO THE UNHAPPY—THE DISCIPLES MUST MAKE JUSTICE SHINE BEFORE THE EYES OF MEN—THE FOUNDATIONS OF JUSTICE—THE PERFECTION OF JUSTICE—OF THE FORMER TIMES AND OF THE PRESENT—ADDITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS—MODESTY, SINCERITY, DISCRETION—LESSONS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM, CHARITY, PRUDENCE, ENERGY—WORKS MUST FOLLOW FAITH THAT THE EDIFICE MAY BE SOLID—IMPRESSIONS OF HIS HEARERS. (St. Matthew v, 1; vii, 29; and parallel passages in St. Luke vi, 20–49.)

OUR Lord's great catechetical discourses naturally follow the selection of the twelve Apostles. The first effort toward the official organisation of the youthful Church

was to be succeeded by the promulgation of the law which was to rule her members, and of the dogmas which were to be the object of her faith. A society is not founded simply by the exterior act which brings individuals into a single whole, nor by any special adoption of a name which distinguishes them from the rest of mankind. It must be cast in an intellectual mould which will give it uniqueness and furnish it, at the same time, with a definite formative principle of being. Its members must needs live by the same breath, in virtue of a common inspiration and of common hopes. What the soul is to the body their own common doctrine will be to this society. Hence Jesus' very first thought, in His desire to form the Church according to His own likeness, must have been to bestow upon her His own thought, as the indispensable element of her life, embracing, at once, both the realm of dogma and the realm of morals, which constitute the speculative and the practical sides of the new faith.

Doubtless He had not waited until now to begin this difficult task. From the outset of His public life He had divided the long days of His Apostolate between healing the sick and instructing the ignorant. But the importunities of the multitude, who demanded miracles above everything else, made continuous and well-developed teaching almost an impossibility. There had been prodigies enough to inspire belief, but faith must now be quickened by doctrine. The future of the Church depends, in part, on the religious knowledge of the Apostles. Therefore, though miraculous works are still to go on, they shall henceforth be relegated to a secondary place in the Gospel history. The discourses are now to become the essential part.

The first which we have to study, and which according to St. Luke immediately follows the selection of the Twelve, is called the *Sermon on the Mount*. It is of capital im-

portance, inasmuch as it exposes the Master's ideas of the three questions that concern our moral life, namely, *happiness*, *justice*, and *wisdom*.[1] We may rightly say that this was in a way the charter of the New Law. St. Luke has preserved for us only an abridgment of it. St. Matthew, who, as Papias says, took special pains to gather Our Lord's sayings, presents this discourse with a wealth of development. Owing to the analogous nature of the subjects, and through the force of a simple association of ideas, he has even inserted some fragments, which on St. Luke's authority we shall place where they more naturally belong.[2] Even without these fragments, the discourse remains comparatively of such length that some have advanced the opinion that it was not a single instruction but a summary of successive teachings which Jesus gave to the people during His sojourn upon the mount. This hypothesis is not improbable, if we admit that the Saviour detained the multitude for some time in the solitary places where He seemed temporarily to have established Himself.[3]

[1] M. Godet, in his *Commentary on St. Luke*, 3d edit., proposes another division of Jesus' discourse which deserves notice: 1st, the call of those who were to constitute the new society; 2d, the fundamental principles of that society; 3d, the responsibilities of its members. We think it can be connected with our own. Jesus promises *happiness* to those whom He *calls*, He prescribes *justice* to those who *come*, and He recommends *wisdom* to those who *remain* with Him.

[2] It is certainly not impossible that Our Lord should have more than once repeated the same instructions, yet it is not probable that His rich nature, in expounding the same thoughts, always had servile recourse to the same figures and often to the same expressions. Inasmuch as it is evident that St. Matthew did not seek to maintain the strictest order in his narrative, we may reasonably suppose that he was not much more concerned about adhering to it in his discourses. As he groups together, simply because they have an analogous meaning (ch. xiii), parables separated from each other by several incidents, so he may have united in one great moral thesis diverse fragments that refer to the development of the spiritual life.

[3] By explaining the terms καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ as *establishing Himself* instead of *seating Himself*, we more easily do away with all difficulties arising from the apparent divergences of St. Luke. But this translation, which, moreover, is not the most natural, is not absolutely necessary to harmonise the accounts of the two Evangelists. For it is enough to remember that

If Koroun-Hattin is really identical with the Mount of the Beatitudes they were, at the time, not far from the road that led to Capharnaum, in sight of those wild and rocky defiles of Arbela where Herod, in his pursuit of the Zealots, had caused movable cages to be suspended from the almost inaccessible precipices, thus enabling his soldiers to reach the champions of national independence in their solitary retreats. The Mount of the Beatitudes rises, in fact, to the south-west of Arbela, at the eastern extremity of the beautiful plain of Sephoris, at about two hours' distance from Tiberias and three from Magdala. Because of its peculiar formation and the small village located upon its northern slope the Arabs have named it the *Horns of Hattin.* A broad plateau spreads out about one hundred and fifty feet above the level of the highway which runs along it to the south, and between two peaks of irregular height, in which, on the east and on the west, the mountain terminates. Sections of rock, which bear traces as of a circle of picturesque seats, seem to attest that here in former times some august assembly had convened. Upon the peak to the east is a small and perfectly level space, quite uniform, and measuring, perhaps, three hundred paces in circumference. In this spot Jesus passed a whole night in prayer before He made His selection of Apostles. From here He descended into the second plateau, which St. Luke calls "a level place," [4] and there rejoined the people who were awaiting Him.

here, as in the calling of the four on the shore of the lake, St. Matthew abridges, while St. Luke gives the details. Thus, the first Synoptic simply says that Jesus climbed the mountain and preached there; the third tells us that He passed the night on the mountain top, and that then, having chosen the Twelve, He descended into a plain upon its slope. There He *halted* (ἔστη) according to St. Luke, whereas He *sat down* according to St. Matthew. What contradiction is there between the two Evangelists?

[4] This is the meaning of ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινοῦ. If he meant to designate the *plain,* he would have said ἐπὶ πεδίου. The author passed through these

The gathering was made up of people from all parts. First, Galilee, and then Judea and Jerusalem, Decapolis, the lands beyond the Jordan, even the heathen countries, such as Idumæa, Tyre, and Sidon, were represented by pilgrims, some of whom were in search of instruction, while others sought to be cured or wished only to see through curiosity.

The multitude was grouped around Jesus quite naturally in hierarchical order. Like an immense crown, the nameless crowd enclosed the disciples in a circle of honour, and the latter in their turn respectfully surrounded the group of newly chosen Apostles. The Master presided. And here we find the first integral representation of the Church united about her Head, with her ministers of the first and second orders and the people. The Saviour, thus contemplating His work, must have experienced a serene joy. At last there was the Israel of the second alliance, living and awaiting the bread of the Word. St. Matthew says: "Jesus, opening His mouth, taught them."

Of the many questions which He might have made the theme of His instruction, He deemed it best to begin with that of *happiness*. The philosophy of all ages had been occupied with it, but had never dreamed of solving it in the sense in which the new religion would expound it. Jesus is to make relative happiness identical with humility in the present life, and absolute happiness with the joys of the life to come.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!" With these words He first declares happy those souls who, in their detachment from the goods of earth, are great enough to despise them, though they

places in the spring of 1899. They agree well with the terrible memories that Josephus (*Antiq.*, xiv, 15, 4, 5; *B. J.*, i, 16, 2–4) has associated with their name.

possess them, or not to desire them when they have them not. The Kingdom of Heaven is their right, their assured possession. One's flight toward the higher world is never loftier than when one is free from entanglement in the snares of matter. To despise earth is to purchase heaven.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land!" Meekness, the flower of charity whose sweet fragrance checks the hand that is about to pluck it, receives the promise of ruling the land. Violence is not durable; it is condemned to devour itself; and, in any case, it can produce only victims or malcontents. Those who employ it leave behind them naught but hateful memories. Meekness, which is yet a force, but a restrained force, is at all times unchanging and beneficent. Its power is the greater the more directly it is exercised on hearts. If it conquers, it conceals its triumphs beneath the honest assertions of most tender kindness. He who has received it as his portion, or who has acquired it by labour, may esteem himself blessed. His influence in the world will be great; but greater yet will be his merit before God. His certain recompense is in particular the promised land of God's kingdom, triumph in eternity.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Tears, however bitter, are still a blessing. If they are caused by deception, they may be likened to a veil that falls from our eyes and discloses to us life in its sad reality. If they are caused by repentance, they are a cleansing sacrament; if by love, they are a cry that does violence to heaven itself. God resists not; He gives Himself to the loving heart that calls Him. The Messiah's coming is the best argument to prove that. He comes to tell those who love God, I am the proof that God loves you; to those who repent of their sins, they are forgiven

you; to those who weep for their follies, henceforth I shall be your light; and all are greatly comforted.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled." This ardent desire of justice is the characteristic mark of great spirits. It makes itself felt in the soul with a violence like that of the most imperative needs of our material nature, hunger and thirst. And nothing is more natural; justice is the true, the beautiful, and the good, for which our souls have been created; the spirit in us demands this divine nourishment, just as our bodies must have food and drink. Unfortunately the majority of men stifle this, the soul's natural cry; but blessed is he who asks for God and His justice. He shall have them and shall be filled with their delights; Jesus brings them both.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Kindness begets kindness. If the heart readily turns toward all who suffer, in order to sympathise with them in their pain, to assuage it, to check it, it is not possible that God, in Whose sight we are all beggars in various stages of misery, should fail to turn toward us to touch, to heal, and to lift us up. Nothing more surely reaches Our Heavenly Father's heart than the sight of our own heart's charity for our earthly brethren. His mercy is the reward of ours.

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." The soul's eye, like the body's eye, may see only when it is undimmed. If it is in any way tarnished, it discerns only imperfectly the objects upon which it looks. If it is absolutely defiled, it sees absolutely nothing. Hence we know how it is that impurity, injustice, and pride are commonly associated with infidelity, and that an evil life leads to atheism. Whatever name we give it, uncleanness introduced into the soul intercepts the visual ray. The

power of insight fails; belief ceases; and faith is even declared to be impossible. The unsullied heart, or even the heart to which repentance has given back its life, finds, on the other hand, that faith is easy and, as it were, quite natural. All things speak to it of God, and invite it to familiar intercourse with Him. In all creatures it beholds His image, and at the close of its meditations it hears His voice. Yet this earthly vision, however consoling, is merely the prelude and the guarantee of the clear vision in heaven.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The Heavenly Father has in the depth of His divine being a peace that nothing can disturb, and He is forever pouring it abroad for the happiness of His creatures. Thus His true children are those whom nothing can move, since they are at peace with themselves; and the testimony of their conscience sets them above all life's agitations. This calmness, this serenity, this quiet of mind spreads around them a sweet and peaceful atmosphere that charms and transforms those who come near them. The children of God, having peace themselves, communicate it to others.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake,[5] for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you."

Such are the various classes of men to whom blessedness is promised! Such the Church in her fulness as her Founder conceives her! Such the story of the elect! Whoever is humble, patient, afflicted, devoted, detached

[5] St. Augustine, in *Ps.* xxxiv, 13, says very wisely: "Martyres non facit pœna, sed causa. Nam si pœna faceret martyres, omnia metalla martyribus plena essent; omnes catenæ martyres traherent; omnes qui gladio feriuntur coronarentur. Nemo ergo dicat: Quia patior, justus sum," etc.

from the goods of earth, in love with virtue and with duty, and this without noise or violence, is inscribed a citizen of the new kingdom. The Church will receive no others, and if it happened that, at times, the spirit of men should give her any strength other than that of her patience, her charity, her sorrow, her poverty, her mercy, her sanctity, it would be always to the detriment of her true good and future influence.

No doubt these assertions read like a series of paradoxes, but not one of them is as strange as that of the Cross. Yet there is no doubt that the folly of the Cross has saved the world. By the theory of happiness, as Jesus expounds it, the Church is to be forever young, flourishing, and respected. They love her not who seek to guide her to her triumph by any other path.

As if He feared that His thought might not have been understood, or that His hearers might not have been disposed to receive it, the Saviour repeats it under another form, stronger and more emphatic.[6]

"Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation!" [7] They have the wealth of this present life, and it suffices for them. Their souls feed upon it, find in it their joy, their happiness, their last end. Gold thus takes the place of God. Hence it is a great misfortune. And as worldly success always makes vice easy, it turns out as by a kind of fate that man without God to fear and puffed up with vices to gratify, buries himself in the degrad-

[6] We find this in St. Luke. He gives an abridgment of the exposition of the Beatitudes, preserving only four of the eight; and yet he depicts the Saviour uttering four maledictions parallel with the four benedictions He had pronounced. So, in ancient days Israel had been invited to observe the law of God, according to the prescriptions of Moses (*Deut.* xxvii, 11), in a series of blessings and maledictions, which came down alternately from Garizim and from Ebal.

[7] This is a proof that the first Beatitude really speaks of poverty, properly so called, or at least of the liberty of the soul so far as the goods of this life are concerned, and not of humility, or of ignorance, or of simplicity of spirit.

ing life of the senses, and, rejoicing in time, laughs at eternity.

"Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger!" The license that fills a man with pleasure during this life, procures for him a most awful famine after death.

"Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep!" The eternal deception, the terrible awakening in the future life, await the senseless revellers, who now are deafened by their own laughter, and spend their lives in self-contentment, without giving a moment to self-examination or to the knowledge of their own unworthiness.

"Woe to you when men shall bless you, for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets!" When a man accepts such approbation from the world, it is a sign that he flatters human passion instead of checking it.

To the guilty the Apostle must be unhesitatingly like his conscience, which is severe; like the voice of justice, which binds and holds in chains; like the sting of remorse, which rouses, persecutes, and tortures; otherwise he would betray the sacred duties of his ministry. Though men should rise in anger against him, though they curse him, though they persecute him, all this is natural. It is for him not to waver.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," exclaims Jesus; "but if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out and to be trodden on by men." As salt preserves food from final decomposition, so religious truth, if it endure, is to guard the world against the principles of dissolution which it naturally has within itself, and to save it from barbarism. If truth be belittled, disfigured, obliterated, the salt without its savour will be but a false and impotent wisdom; it will differ not from the mass it was destined to preserve

and to transform. Men will trample under foot this truth, corrupted like all the rest, and there shall be only universal death.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house." The Apostles have not received the dignity of Apostleship to remain unknown; the disciples who are drawn from every rank and walk of life have not received the light of the Gospel to conceal it. What has been conferred on them is not for themselves, it is also and especially for others. The truth they possess must shine and enlighten those that sit in darkness. Jesus enthusiastically hails this glorious city, the Church, which He beholds already raised to the summit of the mountain and giving light, as a beacon, to mankind seated at her feet. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." The virtuous man gains credence for virtue, and thereby for the moral law and for the lawgiver; the disciple by his life is his master's pride; the son by his resemblance ought to make his father known and admired. Jesus intends that the sanctity of His faithful shall be itself an eloquent sermon.

Such are the thoughts that serve as a transition to the principal part or body of the discourse: Why is sanctity or justice the fundamental duty of every citizen in the new kingdom?

Jesus begins by declaring that the basis of justice is ever the same. To-morrow, as yesterday, it will rest upon the sum of the moral precepts that fill the Old Testament. There is no question here of Mosaic ceremonialism.[8] Tran-

[8] This observation, absolutely well founded, is in our opinion the best solution of the difficulty raised concerning the words of Jesus that follow.

sitory and symbolical, merely, that ceremonialism must have an end. "Do not think," says Jesus, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil. Amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled." Founded in the very essence of things, the moral law has its final motive in God. For it is but an emanation, a ray of the eternal law, as imperishable as God Himself. Hence Jesus suppresses nothing. His mission is to explain it, to put it more clearly before men by positive precepts, to make its spirit felt by disengaging it from the ridiculous superfluities with which the Rabbis have overladen it. As needless and as profitless as were the additions of the Rabbis, so essential and so sacred for all the faithful shall be the development that Jesus gives forth. New rays of eternal truth turned upon man's eyes are to modify the horizon of our life. The Rabbis have given a mechanical interpretation to the law; Jesus comes to spiritualise it, and, though it will be essentially the same as before, the moral rule of mankind will be henceforth more visibly like the eternal rule that guides God Himself. Therefore, the precepts He will promulgate [9] are of the highest importance; they

If we admit that by the law He means the Mosaic observances, we shall find it difficult to explain His manner of treating the ablutions, and the external purifications, and the question of the Sabbath. Who will venture to say that in practice Jesus has not suppressed even one iota of the legal formalism? To be sure, many think that He meant to maintain Mosaism and all its prescriptions during His life. They declare that He could not do otherwise without being imprudent, and that, in default of this, He would not have been understood even by His friends. Finally, it is said, His words on this subject are categorical. Yes, and so much so, indeed, that if we accept them without restriction, Mosaism, with its complex system of laws, would have to survive heaven and earth, which is not the case. As a matter of fact, we see that St. Paul understood them quite differently, and, at the proper time, he leads the Apostles and the Church to understand them as he does.

[9] By giving this meaning to the demonstrative τούτων the succession of ideas in Our Lord's discourse is made much more natural.

will divide the future from the past, Christian from Jew.

"He, therefore," continues Jesus, "that shall break one of these least commandments and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." Man regenerated and called to join his life more closely to that of God, has not the right to decline such an honour. At all events, the more faithful he is in following the lofty way of perfection proposed to him, the more worthy does he prove himself of his Master and of the esteem of the friends of God.

"For I tell you, unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The justice of the Pharisees is wanting in internal truth; it is odiously false. These hypocritical formalists have killed conscience by exaggerating the importance of legal observances. Against them, once for all, the spirit must be made to prevail over the letter. Therefore, what is to be added to the moral theology of ancient Israel becomes obligatory for all those who desire to be members of the new Church. If they do not observe it, they do not belong to that Church. Let every one open his ears and strengthen his heart. Here follow the conditions of justice or Christian holiness.

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment.[10] But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judg-

[10] This judgment is that of the Ancients who sat at the gates of each city to dispense justice, even in capital causes, as is remarked in *Deut.* xvii, 2, 5, 8. It is not known for certain whether these judges numbered twenty-three, as some claim, or only seven, as Josephus (*Antiq.*, iv, 8, 14) seems to say.

ment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,[11] shall be in danger of the Council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the fire of the valley of the sons of Hinnom." [12]

Even though there was, in reality, a perceptible gradation in the three kinds of punishment to which Jesus here alluded,[13] it is not clear that there is a corresponding gravity in the three faults mentioned. To say *raca*, or fool, to one's fellow, to be enraged against him, do not constitute a very evident difference of guilt. We must take the Master's thought *as a whole*. Wishing to have us understand how reprehensible the sentiment of hatred is, He gives to His language a certain exaggeration, which common sense reduces to its due proportions. Evidently He does not mean to say that the one who insults merits a more terrible punishment than the assassin; the anger that insults is not more intense than that which kills. No, His object being to put forth as important that which Judaism regarded as unimportant, He emphasises His thought and says: "According to you, the murderer alone merits pun-

[11] The word *Raca* is a term of contempt, derived from the Hebrew *raqaq, to spit upon*, and means *a despicable man*, as St. Chrysostom and Theodoret point out; or better still, according to St. Jerome, from the Syro-Chaldaic *reiqah, to be empty, without brains*. Yet it is remarkable that in the Talmudic phrases, where this word is found, it appears to be rather an oath than an insult. Thus, *Tanchum*, fol. 18, col. 7: "Raca," says a Jew to a Pagan, who invites him to partake of pork, "de bestiis etiam mundis apud vos non comedendum." And elsewhere a princess unduly ill-treated by her husband exclaims: "Raca, ego sum filia regis."

[12] The word Γέεννα is nothing else than the Hebrew name *Ghê-Hinnom*, or Ghê-bene Hinnom, "the valley of Hinnom," or "the sons of Hinnom," given to the valley which extends along the southern side of Jerusalem and toward the west, and in which faithless Israel had given itself up to the worship of Moloch. (*IV Kings* xvi, 3.) On the return from the captivity, this place of hateful memories was looked upon with aversion and became a sort of dumping-ground, where fire was kept to consume rubbish. This was a figure of hell, which was also called *Gehenna*.

[13] There were three kinds of punishments among the Jews, the sword, stoning to death, and fire. The first was applied by the tribunal of each city, the second by the Sanhedrim, the third by public indignation.

ishment; according to Me, the man, too, who hates and is angry, will meet with a punishment more terrible than that of earthly tribunals; for he merits eternal fire." Thus the new law regulates and embraces in its purview not only the acts of man, but his thoughts; not the work of the hands alone, but the secret sentiments of the heart. Whether anger remains silent in the depths of the soul, or breaks forth upon our lips, Jesus severely condemns it and likens it to homicide; both proceed from one source, hatred of our fellow.

These sentiments of bitterness toward our brothers, with which Judaism scarcely seems to have occupied itself, are so blameworthy before God that by entertaining them one becomes unworthy of heaven's regard. "If, therefore," the Master goes on, "thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." God is honoured more by the sacrifice of our pride, of our ill-will, of our hatred, than by that of our victories or of our treasures.

Besides, it is not by Him alone that we are commanded to make a prompt reconciliation with our offended brother; our human interests, too, make it our duty. It is of far greater advantage for us to express our regrets and our good dispositions towards him whom we have wounded than to await his claims in justice. We shall gain nothing by a trial, since we are guilty. We have injured him; we are, therefore, his debtor. If we do not make immediate reparation to him, the judge will do so himself and will throw us into prison, which is a figure of eternal damnation. "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest, perhaps, the adversary de-

liver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." From the supernatural stand-point upon which, above all, Jesus wishes to insist, the truth of these considerations is particularly striking. The man who refuses to be reconciled with his brother, while both are on the road of life, ought to be in fear lest death should cast him at the feet of the supreme Judge, and oblige him to expiate by pains long enduring, perhaps eternal, the wrongs he could so easily have righted during life. This new law is, indeed, severe, but how exalted is its morality!

Passing from the fifth commandment to the sixth, Jesus continues the parallel between the legislation of yesterday and that of to-morrow. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery.[14] But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." For to accept the evil suggestion of the flesh, to entertain it, to follow it as far as one can, without the external act, when this latter is impossible, is to commit the crime in the depth of one's soul. Before God the evil is already committed; it matters little that it is not so before men. The heart, therefore, must not be trusted to itself; its desires must be closely watched. "And if thy right eye scandalise thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish rather than thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand scandalise thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish rather than that the whole body

[14] *Exod.* xx, 14.

go into hell." The remedy prescribed is, therefore, as violent as the evil; to break the tenderest bonds, to part from that which has become a portion of one's self, to forbid the eye to look in order to save the heart from yielding, to cut off a member to preserve the body, this is the duty of the children of the new kingdom, the sole means of escaping the eternal payment of justice.

"And it hath been said: Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." All the grounds for divorce recognised by Moses, which the school of Hillel multiplied at pleasure, as we shall see later, are totally suppressed in the New Law. And rightly so. Marriage has created indissoluble bonds between the man and the woman. Though Moses seemed to have tolerated a relaxation of these ties, the evangelical law restores them in all their strength. Except in the case of unfaithfulness, the man has no right to put away his wife. If he repudiates her, he is responsible for the sins that she may commit, whether by a life of misconduct or by taking another husband, with whom she would certainly be guilty of adultery. The deceived husband has the right to expel her who has dishonoured him from his marriage bed, without a care as to what may become of her; he cannot be responsible for misconduct of which he himself has been the first victim and which has compromised the very essence of marriage, the union of two in one flesh. But may he take another spouse? Of this Jesus says nothing here. He will answer this question later on. Nevertheless, by refusing the adulteress the right to marry again, He wishes not only to punish her for her crime, but also to inform her that a bond exists even

after her unfaithfulness; and this bond is upon the liberty of the innocent as well as upon that of the guilty.[15]

"Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord.[16] But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; but let your speech be yea, yea, nay, nay; and that which is over and above these is of evil."

Such, indeed, is the ideal of the new society that, for each of her members, the deep sentiment of his union with God must be the sole guarantee of the truth of what he says. What need to evoke the name and the presence of God when one knows himself to be perpetually under His eye and in His friendship?

Although, in spite of the Saviour's sublime teaching, the evil of the world and the insufficiency of our trust have again authorised the use of the oath in certain circumstances when it is well to remind man of the watchful severity of Providence, it is none the less true that the Christian Church is the more worthy of her Founder when she proves the religious vitality of all her children by showing herself capable of so sublime a counsel. The oath is in itself a consequence of sin. It is demanded because of the inherent malice of our fallen nature, which makes men distrust one another. And we offer to take it because we are conscious, either of the distrust of others or of

[15] These words of the Master are improperly construed as a recognition of the man's right to take another wife when he has repudiated the one who deceived him. No such meaning can be discovered in the Gospel text when studied impartially.

[16] Jesus has in mind here several passages of the law: *Levit.* xix, 12; *Numbers* xxx, 3; *Deut.* xxiii, 22–24.

our own weakness. When the Apostle calls upon God to bear witness to the truth of his words, when God Himself, speaking to man, seems to take solemn oaths, it is simply the better to dispel all doubt in a suspicious and deceitful heart. Such precautions are, in themselves, superfluous. That the law of Christian simplicity and sincerity might be fully practicable, it were essential that all men should be equally good and virtuous, those who listen as well as those who speak. This is the ideal of social life in the Kingdom of God; but it is doubtful if this ideal will ever be realised upon earth.

Continuing the exposition of His sublime teachings, Jesus rises higher yet, perhaps, in the sphere of that perfection wherein He desires to establish our life; so high, indeed, that one wonders if it be possible to follow Him there. Yet we must not forget that a man can be a just man without always attaining the ideal proposed, and that we can derive consolation for not being perfect, from the knowledge that we are at least virtuous.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;[17] but I say to you, not to resist evil; but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other, and if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him. And whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two; give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." Accepted literally, this law of charity would be hopeless and even dangerous. To practise it without regard to circum-

[17] *Exod.* xxi, 24, and elsewhere. Such had been the wisdom of the greatest law-givers of antiquity; and since it regulates acts not of private, but of public justice, Jesus no more means to declare it absolutely wrong than, shortly before, He deemed the oath absolutely criminal. He simply proposes His ideal of charity to heroic souls who will be brave enough to realise it in the various circumstances of ordinary life.

stances and without discernment would be to encourage evil to its greatest extent. By promulgating it in exaggerated terms thoroughly in accordance with Oriental tastes, the Saviour wished only to demonstrate to us how patient, how heroic, how superhuman is the kindness, the gentleness, the self-denial that should characterise His true disciples. Thus He Himself instead of turning the left cheek to the servant who had struck Him on the right, merely said: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?" But into these words He put just what He demanded by His precept: mildness, affability, resignation, that must give the blush to the wicked for their violence and recall them to better feelings.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." [18] The enemy was he who did not practise the Jewish religion.[19] "But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that ye may be the children of your Father, Who is in heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.[20] For if ye love them that love you, what reward shall ye have? Do not even the publicans this? And if ye salute your breth-

[18] *Levit.* xix, 18. The Hebrew word here translated "neighbour" seems to mean in general every man. The Septuagint translates it by ἕκαστος. In reality, the law did not command men to hate their enemies, but we may say that by its severe prescriptions against all who were not children of Israel, it prompted to that hatred.

[19] Vide *St. Luke* x, 27, etc.; Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.*, xi, 6, 5. Tacitus, *Annal.*, v, 4, 5, says: "Adversus alios omnes hostile odium." Citations from the *Talmud* sustain this appreciation: *Midr. Teh.*, fol. 26, 4: "Noli gentilibus benevolentiam aut misericordiam exhibere." Lightfoot, *in Matth.* v, 43, and *in Luc.* ix, 60, has collected a series of topical texts: "Nationes mundi canibus assimilantur—Populi terrarum non vivunt."

[20] This thought is found in Seneca also (*de Benef.*, iv, 26): "Si deos imitaris, da et ingratis beneficia, nam et sceleratis sol oritur, et piratis patent maria."

ren only, what do ye more? Do not also the heathens this? Be ye, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." What divine novelty in these teachings! There is not a religious soul in all these nineteen centuries from whom they have not drawn a cry of admiration. How great and beautiful human nature is when it rises to the practice of such amazing perfection! And how true that the heroes of Christian charity are the living, earthly representatives of the *God of goodness!* History is there to tell it, and the veneration of the people to prove it.

Such, then, is the foundation on which Christian justice shall rest. But it can reach the ideal which Christ has drawn only by putting on the threefold character of modesty, sincerity, and prudence, which will heighten its merit and make it beloved of all.

"Take heed," says the Master, "that ye do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise ye shall not have a reward of your Father, Who is in heaven." This maxim implies no contradiction of what has been recommended above; it does not forbid the faithful to let their light shine before the world. For they ought to do everything to edify their neighbour and to increase God's glory, but nothing to augment their own personal importance; otherwise they would only waste their time, and, having gained their recompense in the praises of the world, they would have nothing to hope for in requital from heaven. From this principle the Saviour derives the following conclusions: "Therefore, when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured of men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward." The image which Jesus employs here is an exact portrayal of the vanity of the man who gives alms ostentatiously. Before he puts it in the poor man's hand, he

makes it shine in the eyes of all; when he lets it fall into the collector's plate, he makes it resound; when he sends it to him who asks it, he wishes the voice of the public to proclaim his deed abroad. Our age, with its subscription lists, partly reproduces this ridiculous perversity.

"When thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee." [21] The just man finds holy consolation in the knowledge that though he must conceal from others and from himself the good works he does, there is one eye which they cannot escape, the eye of God. God reserves for Himself the right of rewarding that which He forbids to be made manifest to others. Such a debtor abundantly supplies for all the rest.

"And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward." Not to God do they pretend to speak, but to men; they do not pray to heaven, but they parade themselves before the world; wherefore they have wasted their time.

"But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee." The cry of the faithful, uttered in the recollection of the soul before God alone, ascends to heaven the more readily for its freedom from thoughts of earth, and reaches the Father's heart the more surely when no strange noise lessens its eloquent ardour.

"And when ye pray, speak not much, as the heathens

[21] Cicero (*Tuscul.*, ii, 26), had the merit of saying something similar: "Mihi quidem laudibiliora videntur omnia quæ sine venditatione et sine populo teste fiunt, nullum theatrum conscientia majus est."

do.[22] For they think that in their much speaking, they may be heard. Be ye not, therefore, like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before ye ask Him." In the belief of the Gentiles the gods were not perpetually present among men, nor cognisant of their various needs. Man had to call upon them, to inform them, to propitiate them by means of endless arguments. The only true God is ever with us, beholds our misery and awaits only our hearts' movement to shower down upon us His blessings. Hence, with Him, long discourses are needless. He requires but a simple prayer, the natural unworded supplication uttered by our heart. Prayer is a thing of feeling rather than of words, as Jesus will tell us later on;[23] and in this sense, we may say, that often the more one talks, the less he prays.

"And when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward." It has always been the custom in the East never to appear at table without having carefully bathed and without having perfumed the head. Whoever appears in public with sad face, disordered hair, beard unkempt, and sprinkled with ashes, thus "disfiguring his face," as the Gospel text has it, thereby makes manifest that he has not yet taken his repast; and if the hour of day is advanced, all conclude that he is observing a rigorous fast. This external show of austerity and of penitential life always succeeds in arousing public admiration. But to

[22] In Terence (*Heauton.*, v, 1, 6), a husband says to his wife: "Ohe, jam desine deos, uxor, gratulando obtundere. Illos tuo ex ingenio judicas ut nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum est centies."

[23] Although the Lord's Prayer has been inserted here (*St. Matt.* vi, 9,), *St. Luke* (xi, 1–4) named the occasion of its pronouncement too positively for us not to follow his information. The Master, according to him, was not before the multitude, but before a limited audience, and He had just prayed when the disciples asked of Him a form of prayer.

mortify one's self with this end in view is most foolish and detestable vanity. After men have praised and paid their homage to this extraordinary asceticism, the hypocrite is only the more filled with himself, and his whole reward lies in this vainglory that he has bought at the price of his fasting. A truly great soul could find no nourishment in so little. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father, Who is in secret; and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee."

From the consideration that our good works must be discreetly hidden even at the risk of seeming less religious than we are, the Saviour naturally [24] passes on to the advice that we must refrain from judging our neighbour; for, if our neighbour, in obedience to the Master's precept, conceals the state of religious perfection in which he lives, we are the more frequently in danger of misjudging him. Here begins the series of lessons on Christian wisdom, which constitutes the third part of the discourse, and is the practical rule of life for those who seek to establish themselves firm and fast in the kingdom.

First of all, to exceeding and great humility the true followers of Christ must unite a charity even greater. "Judge not, that ye may not be judged," [25] says Jesus. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." There is a great consolation for him who can say: I have been indulgent with others; they will be

[24] The teachings that St. Matthew has put between ch. vi, 19, and ch. vii, 1, seem in our opinion to be distributed better in St. Luke, and we shall find them again later on.

[25] This refers to private life where charity should play the leading part. In public life, justice reserves the right to punish officially all crimes; otherwise social organisation would be impossible.

the same with me, if not on earth, surely in heaven. Therefore, if instead of turning our wisdom to the study and criticism of our neighbour's life, we would carefully survey and amend our own, we should prove ourselves most wise. "And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother; Let me cast the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then thou shalt see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." For it is detestable hypocrisy to assume the appearance of inexorable justice, of an ardent zeal against sin, by pursuing the slightest faults in others, when one's self is given up to all the vices. It ill becomes the proud censor whom egotism, avarice, luxury, or anger has blinded, to impart moral teachings to those who are better than he.

Yet the good and the bad are not to be treated indiscriminately. To treat all men with equal confidence would not be the part of wisdom. The Apostle, in particular, before he intrusts the truths of the Gospel to his hearers, must know to whom he speaks. In this sense he is authorised to judge. From the evidence and according to his judgment, he shall speak or be silent. "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and, turning upon you, they rend you." Nothing is worse than to attempt to initiate into heroic virtues, or to teach the maxims of perfection to the vile souls that are all devoted to the gross satisfaction of the senses. They are irritated by the precious stones which they took first for the common grain they feed on, and when they see their error, they trample them beneath their feet. Their deception is transformed into fury, and they to whom you sought to do good,

because they seemed well disposed, turn upon you and bite you with the pretext that you have deceived them.

The great law of charity, which, excluding neither prudence nor justice, inclines nevertheless to inexhaustible indulgence, is to crown these admirable precepts. It is embodied in this aphorism: "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them." This rule is sure and perfectly intelligible to all. "For this is the law and the prophets."

No doubt it is not easy to break with a past of egotism and pride, to hurry on bravely to this road of sacrifice and humility. To hate, to curse, to envy, to calumniate, was natural for ancient mankind; and the change for renewed human nature will cost dear. Yet it must be done. "Enter ye in at the narrow gate," Jesus exclaims, "for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and how straitened the way that leadeth unto life; and few there are that find it." There can be no illusion for him who desires to become a disciple of Jesus. The road He marks out is a steep, narrow, painful path, and the gate of the city where Christian life flourishes is difficult of approach. But he who penetrates there, enters into the kingdom of the higher life and into the realms of eternal happiness.

If any man teach another doctrine and promise other things he is an impostor and must be distrusted. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor can an evil tree bring forth good fruit." Doctrines shape

life. By multiplying their teachings, the Pharisees and all ritualistic Judaism produced nothing that attracted. We have only to look at their works; they are detestable. Hence it would be folly to listen to them. We could produce only what they themselves produce. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire." This is the sanction. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith to Me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father, Who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The new religion is not simply one of exterior forms, of invocations and of homage done to its Founder; even faith, if it be alone, is insufficient. Works are required. To act is as necessary as to believe, and to enter heaven each man must show that he has done the one and the other.

"Every one, therefore," Jesus adds, as conclusion to His magnificent discourse, "that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock." Works strengthen faith, and practice is frequently a first means of producing belief. Therefore, he whose mind and conduct are in keeping with the Master's teachings may be at peace. Thanks to his prudence, neither the trials of life nor even those of death can overturn the solid edifice of his justice and of his piety. Beyond the grave he shall stand with all his works, and he shall be happy for the wisdom he had in knowing that nothing is solid if actions are not there to sustain convictions.

"And every one that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house

upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." We frequently see believers astonish the world by their faith; they prophesy, and accomplish miracles; like an imposing edifice, their public life commands the admiration of all; but we know not the secret of their inmost life, which is far from being in unison with their faith. The foundations which should have been of firm rock do not exist. As long as no crisis occurs, every one is ignorant of the insufficiency of the work; but when the decisive moment has come, the whole tumbles down, and of the proud palace there remains naught but ruins. Jesus leaves His hearers while this impression of eternal woe reserved for the imprudent is still upon them. They seem to hear the tumbling of this edifice among the far-off echoes of eternity.

The multitudes were filled with admiration for these instructions uttered with an authority, a clearness, a loftiness not to be found among the Jewish doctors. It was evident that the new Master held nothing in common with them.

CHAPTER II

THE LAW OF MERCY AND THE SINFUL WOMAN IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

Magdala and Its Evil Reputation—Where Simon's Hospitality Fails—The Sinner in the Midst of the Banquet—The Heroism of Her Repentance—Unfavourable Attitude of the Pharisee—Jesus' Question — The Lesson Addressed to Simon — A First Grace Begets Love and Love Calls Forth Pardon—Peace of Soul and the New Life Created by the Words of Jesus. (St. Luke vii, 36–50.)

Jesus, desirous of returning to Capharnaum, turned toward the shores of the lake and came to Magdala, a small borough about three miles north of Tiberias, at the entrance of the plain of Genesareth. The Mohammedan village of El-Megdel has retained with its poor huts only the name of ancient Magdala and, perhaps, the remains of the tower (*Migdol*) from which this name was derived. Yet its site, at the foot of a steep mountain, upon the lake-shore is very picturesque; and the imagination depicts with ease, even amid the hedges of thorny bushes, the gigantic nettles, the pools of water, and the black stones that now cover the soil, the gracious spectacle once presented in this favoured spot when countless brooks kept alive the fertile orchards, the flowers and fruits and the

luxuriant vegetation, that made the land of Genesareth, as Josephus says, a veritable earthly paradise. Beneath a sky that will bear comparison with that of the tropics, amid a nature so beautiful, it is not surprising that morals were very lax. The Rabbis attribute the destruction of Magdala to the misconduct of its inhabitants.[1]

It was probably [2] in this town that Jesus was invited to dinner by a Pharisee named Simon. Whether this man had been cured of some infirmity by the Saviour, as might be inferred from the conversation that followed, or had invited the Master to his house through curiosity or vainglory, it is not easy to say. Jesus accepted his invitation.

His reception was rude and scarcely civil. It was difficult for the ancient pride of Pharisaism to bend before one who used but little regard in treating with a sect as haughty as it was powerful. The master of the house failed to give the illustrious guest he received even the most ordinary marks of respect and friendship.

It was customary when entering a house as a guest, first to remove the shoes, almost as we remove our hats, and to leave them in the vestibule. The head of the family then kissed his guest upon the cheek, saying to him: "Peace be to you!" He then escorted him to a seat, and servants at once came to bathe his feet. In warm countries, where roads were thick with dust, this bath was most refreshing. In addition to this the Jews looked upon it as a rite of purification which was almost indispensable.

[1] *Echah Rabbathi*, fol. 71, 4, and *Taamit Hieros.*, fol. 69, 1: "Quare destructa est Magdala? Propter scortationem."

[2] In relating the story of the repentant sinner, St. Luke neglects to name the town where this touching scene was enacted and it is solely because of the identification of Magdalen as the sinful woman that the name of Magdala has been put forward. The reasons alleged to prove that the town was Naim or Capharnaum are not solid. The incident as found in *St. Luke* vii, 36, is altogether fragmentary, and has no connection with what precedes or what follows.

A special servant, or the master of the house himself, afterwards anointed with fragrant oil the hair and beard of him to whom welcome was accorded. Even to-day the Orientals sprinkle their guests with rose-water. And, finally, when the time came for the repast, the guest was given an opportunity to wash his hands. As we shall soon see, this ceremonial was neglected in great part in the reception given to Jesus.

In the meantime the company had seated themselves at table. Following a custom which has more than once afforded us interesting observations in our travels,[3] the Orientals freely open the doors of the banquet hall to all the curious who desire to enjoy the sight of the feast. These come and go, and while there may listen to what is said, or even take part in the conversation. No doubt it is thought that the presence of these outsiders adds to the pleasure and the solemnity of the repast.

In the crowd that had followed Jesus into the Pharisee's house was a woman whose presence was something of a scandal in a respectable gathering. The unfortunate woman, led on, perhaps, by some one of those sudden, stupefying accidents that all at once cast a pearl amid the offal, had unconsciously reached the very bottom of the pit. A momentary weakness, during which woman is despoiled of that protecting halo called honour, nearly always leads to the greatest disorders. Family, friends, courage abandoning her, misery, passion, human brutality torturing her, all contribute to beat down the last ramparts that remain standing. The sinner here spoken of (who was, very probably, as we shall see later on, Mary, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus) belonged to an honourable and wealthy family. Nothing had checked her debaucheries; she astonished the whole town by the story of her

[3] See *Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, vol. ii, p. 211.

license. Prostituting her youth and her beauty, she had become, in the Evangelist's words, a public sinner, a harlot.[4]

What were the memories, what the remorse, what the discourses that succeeded in moving this soul in its abandonment? Had she heard on the Master's lips one of those merciful utterances capable of exalting our lives more surely than the threats of eternity? Had Jesus surprised her and reprimanded her in the very midst of her follies, in the filth of the public square, when the seven demons, the hideous symbol of all the vices, were tormenting her, and had He with a word put an end to their possession [5] of her, by giving the wretched woman back to herself and to her bitter reflections? This latter is the best explanation [6] of what follows, and the best means of understanding how, even before she had received forgiveness for her crimes, Magdalen already owed to Jesus a great debt of

[4] The qualification ἁμαρτωλός, which signifies a sinner of any kind whatever means, in the case of a woman, a courtesan or an adulteress, and especially is it so if there be no other designation. In reality a woman's great sin is either conjugal faithlessness or prostitution. And we need not hesitate to believe that the offences of this woman were as numerous as they were humiliating, since Jesus deliberately says of her: αὐτῆς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αἱ πολλαί, and Simon qualifies her misconduct as extremely scandalous. This, in fact, is the meaning of the words τὶς καὶ ποταπὴ ἡ γυνή.

[5] *St. Luke* viii, 2.

[6] The supposition that Jesus had delivered Magdalen from seven demons (*St. Luke* viii, 2) previous to the incident of the feast related in this chapter, logically follows, if we identify this illustrious friend of Jesus with the sinful woman. It cannot be admitted that a demoniac would have been capable of such a demonstration of repentance and of love. It follows then that her conduct during the feast was an act of gratitude. The guests, ignorant of her past, were shocked at her boldness and at Jesus' forbearance. It was then that Jesus, Whose habitual contention in the presence of the Pharisees was that there is no creature so deeply fallen that he cannot be restored by grace and be admitted into the kingdom of God, even before the children of Abraham, expounds to Simon the very appropriate parable of the two debtors. This simple woman owes to Jesus her deliverance from the seven demons (500 pence), the Pharisee was bound to Him by a smaller but undenoted service (50 pence). What a difference in attitude therefore on the part of both disciples toward the Master! The gratitude of Simon is a small matter, the devotion of Magdalen reaches the extreme limits of

gratitude. It is certain that a deep-felt emotion had stirred her whole being. It is no rare thing, when virtue springs up again in contrite hearts, to see them attain all at once the limits of the most astounding heroism. To their repentance they bring the same intensity of passion they had brought to their crimes. The most profound humility, the most courageous love of God, the most pitiless hatred of self were all suddenly revealed in the poor woman's soul and inspired her conduct on this occasion.

Holding in her hands a box of ointment, one of the wonted accessories of a life as lawless as hers, amid

heroism. In a way, it was well for her to have fallen so low, since now she has a chance to rise again so high. For what is the issue of it all? The grateful love that Magdalen testifies for Jesus insures for her the pardon of her past sins. The wretched demoniac, who was delivered in body yesterday, regains to-day, together with purification of her soul, the liberty of the children of God. Simon, who deems himself irreproachable, remains just where he had been in his pharisaical righteousness. For a first favour the one feels herself borne on to immense gratitude, the other shows but little emotion. The result will be that because of her great love, much will be forgiven to her, while for his indifference nothing is said of the other.

It is in this presentment of the facts that we must seek a satisfactory solution of certain difficulties found in the Gospel story. If it is not admitted that Jesus had been the benefactor of this sinner before the feast, we must logically conclude from the parable uttered by the Master that Magdalen *loves because she is pardoned*, and not, as Jesus clearly says later, *that she is pardoned because she has loved*. If the five hundred pence remitted represented, not the expulsion of the seven demons, but the remission of her sins, we must acknowledge that Magdalen's love is the *consequence*, not the *cause*, of her absolution. But, in that case, what shall we say of the explicit declaration on the part of Jesus: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much"? The cause of her pardon is clearly said to be her penitent love; her absolution is the *consequence*. For it is impossible to deprive the word ὅτι of its sense of causality. The aorist ἠγάπησε, besides, is there to imply that the love preceded the pardon, as a cause precedes the effect. There would, therefore, be a flagrant contradiction between Jesus' parable and His declaration if Magdalen had not been indebted to the Master previous to the feast. It disappears if she was already bound to Him.

It is to be regretted, no doubt, that St. Luke did not express all that was needed to clear away this difficulty. But we have here another instance of the great respect with which he treated the fragmentary narratives which were at hand in the preparation of his Gospel. The identification of Magdalen with the sinful woman was not in the narrative, and he was unwilling to insert it.

the baleful smiles and humiliating words that greeted her as she passed, she broke through the crowd and reached the banquet-hall. On her brow the blush of shame had replaced the impudent stare of vice, her downcast eye was nothing bold, her gait was that of a victim advancing to the sacrifice. But her past had been so degrading that no one noticed her present change. Nothing is more painful, to one who has by force of energy effected one's own moral resurrection, than entrance among surroundings that are cold, sceptical, and licentious, where no credit is given for victory in the struggle, but where, rather, unfeeling and inconsiderate remarks drive one back again into the past from which he has completely emerged.

After the first movement of malignant surprise, as they beheld the woman approach Jesus, the company wondered what was going to happen. They were unaware that their Guest had already performed a service for her.

The ancients, it is well known, took their meals reclining, resting upon the left arm, while their unsandalled feet were concealed behind the triclinium. It was there, undetected by the Master's gaze, but beneath the eyes of all the assembly, that Magdalen fell upon her knees. Overwhelmed with sorrow, shame, and emotion, she had not the courage to utter a single word; but her love, her contrition, and her faith were spoken in her every act. Her eyes, which had once been guilty of so many evil glances, extinguishing what was left of their impure flame, had become like a twin-fountain of tears religiously bedewing the Saviour's feet; her hair, which had once been the crown of her wicked vanity, and which was even yet redolent of luxuriousness, fell unkempt, as if to give emphasis to the public avowal of her misconduct;[7] she used

[7] The priest loosened the Jewess' hair before making her drink the bitter water when she had been guilty of unchastity. In a country whose women

it to wipe the feet which she bathed with her tears. Her guilty lips were thus purified by contact with virginal flesh, and her heart was breaking in sobs of repentance and of love for God. Then she opened the box of ointment, fit symbol of her own soul, which with all its newly acquired virtues she was desirous of pouring forth without reserve before Jesus, and she began to anoint His feet, clasping them the while most tenderly.

Such a manifestation of repentance must have been all the more astonishing to the assembly, since He to Whom it was made seemed absolutely insensible to it. In the proud, hard soul of the Pharisee it aroused only this unkind reflection: "If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner." The touch of a public sinner, according to the teaching of the Pharisees, was as foul as that of the leper.[8] Such are the sad consequences of formalism! The only thought that strikes Simon before a spectacle so sublime is that the Master is in danger of contracting a legal impurity! A cutting criticism, at once of Jesus and of the heroic penitent, is all that he can find in his soul. As he imagines that the Master knows not what sort of creature the woman is, he must be taught that he does not know what manner of man he is himself. "Simon," said the Saviour, breaking the silence at last, "I have somewhat to say to thee." "Master, say it," responded the Pharisee. And after these phrases of mere civility, Jesus began. He

always kept the head covered, unkempt hair was a sign of great humiliation or of profound grief. Cf. in the *Talmud, Sot.*, f. 5, 1; *III Macc.*, i, 9. Profane history relates, also, of pagan women, that in times of public calamity they went to wash with their tears and to wipe with their hair the threshold of the temples, and that the master at times wiped his hands in the hair of the slaves who served him.

[8] "Quanto spatio a meretrice recedendum est? *R.* Chasda respondet: Ad quatuor cubitos." Schoettgen, *Hor. Hebr.*, i, p. 348.

desired to explain this woman's attitude by recalling that she was His debtor. For some reason, which we are not familiar with, Simon, also, was under obligations to Jesus; the indebtedness, however, was less than that of Magdalen. Hence the natural sense of the parable that follows. "A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which, therefore, of the twain loveth him most?" Simon, answering, said: "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." And He said to him: "Thou hast judged rightly." [9] From that moment the outburst of feeling on the part of the sinful woman is understood. It must be looked upon as the expression of great gratitude, which, upheld by her faith,[10] now draws upon her another favour from Jesus.

For, as He turned toward Magdalen, pointing to her, at the same time, with a gesture of sympathy, He observed: "Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but she with ointment hath anointed My feet. Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." There is the crowning grace of divine mercy. And, turning again to Simon, Jesus adds: "But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." So it happens that those who have fallen low, by the very fact that they rise again through co-operation with a first grace, may in the outburst of their gratitude rise to sublime heights; while cold natures, because they are all but blame-

[9] This word of the Master, ὀρθῶς ἔκρινας, recalls the πάνυ ὀρθῶς of the *Socratic Dialogues*.

[10] From verse 50, it is evident that for Magdalen faith was the first element of salvation; love was the second.

less, will remain fixed in their condition of half-virtue. The lesson goes straight to the conscience of all those who look down upon sinners, and suspect not that by a movement of the soul these can rise on the wings of repentant love not merely to justice, but even to a perfection which they themselves may never attain. The mainspring of the moral and religious life being in the heart, he will approach the nearest to God who can love the most. The point from which one starts matters little; the point reached is the thing to consider.

To Simon nothing is said of his own soul or of his need of spiritual regeneration. To the sinful woman Jesus addresses this consoling remark: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." She, therefore, is done with sin; the divine mercy with a word has effaced the whole shameful past that weighed down upon her head. Whom God pardons, shall men still blame? He it is Who had borne the offence; He it is Who, forgetting that same, enjoins upon all to think of it no more.

In this identification of Jesus with God Who forgives, there was an evident proof that personally He deemed Himself God like His Father, and those present, once again, were shocked. But He, unmoved, as if He heard not their murmurings, simply said to the humbled woman: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." [11]

[11] To insist on identifying this account with *St. Matth.* xxvi, 6; *St. Mark* xiv, 3; *St. John* xii, 4, is to lose sight of those differences of place, time, and persons which forbid us to consider as one two distinct anointings. The present one, it is true, is given by St. Luke alone, while he, in turn, passes over those of the other three. In St. Luke's account we are in Galilee, almost at the beginning of the Messianic ministry, and the woman in the scene is a stranger to the house—Simon supposes that she is unknown to Jesus—of unsavoury reputation in the town, inspiring the guests with scorn. Later we shall be at Bethany in Judea at the gates of Jerusalem, within six days of the fatal Passover, and the anointing will be done in quite a different manner, by a person whom Jesus knew because He had received hospitality at her house, and who, besides, appeared to be at the banquet

She is no longer the lost woman. Because she has believed, the Good Shepherd has taken her to Himself, has removed her outcast estate, has clothed her with new womanhood. On the firm ground of righteousness, where He has just established her, there is no more remorse for her, no more moral suffering, but the peace that comes of obedience and the joy of union with God. Magdalen having received the peace of the Lord, feels already springing in her heart a new life and a savour of unexpected chastity. Her happiness radiates from out her tears. "Go," the Master says; her love makes reply: "I will abide with Him Who hath given me life."

Magdalen, in truth, never after left Jesus' side. Through her sorrow and her virtues she became the blessed and saintly friend of her Saviour.

as if in her own home with the members of her family. Finally and most important of all, the results of the two anointings are very dissimilar. In the first, the Master grants a solemn pardon to a bravely repentant sinner. In the second, He praises a friend, and announces His own approaching death.

CHAPTER III

CONTROVERSY WITH THE PHARISEES

THE PHARISEES PRECEDE JESUS TO CAPHARNAUM TO CALUMNIATE HIM—HE IS IN LEAGUE WITH BEELZEBUB — HIS CRUSHING REPLIES — THE DEFEAT OF THE STRONG MAN — HIS TERRIBLE REVENGE — THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST—ENTHUSIASM OF THE MULTITUDE—ASKING FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN—THE SIGN OF JONAS—IN THE JUDGMENT, THE QUEEN OF SABA AND THE NINEVITES WILL CONFOUND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — THE EYE OF THE SOUL — FAITH CREATES KINSHIP WITH JESUS. (St. Mark iii, 19–35; St. Matthew xii, 22–50; St. Luke xi, 17–36.)

FROM this sympathetic mercy which Jesus has for fallen but repentant souls, compared with His severe attitude toward pharisaical pride, one could easily conclude that His preference was for the unfortunate and the humble. He found in them the first element of moral resurrection: contempt of self and courage for the most difficult sacrifices. It is all that His grace demanded for the supernatural rebirth of life.

But if to consort with sinners was a crime, to prefer these sinners to the Pharisees must have seemed an abomination. They were not slow to make Him feel it cruelly.

For from that moment the opposition of the Pharisees in Galilee became particularly vigorous and daring. The sermon on the Mount had produced upon the representatives of the old formalism the effect of a declaration of principles absolutely subversive and revolutionary. The welcome accorded to sinners now filled the measure of His opposition, and it was decided that no further caution was required.

Thus, when the Master, followed by His disciples, made His entrance into Capharnaum, He found that His adversaries had preceded Him to that place in order to circumvent Him by their calumnious accusations. To their mind, His works were performed through the help of the devil. No attack could be more brutal or more unskilful. It did not check the people, at the first report of His arrival, from hurrying in crowds to the house where He had stopped.[1] This was probably Peter's house, a small dwelling in which we have already seen a tumultuous gathering. The welcome, according to St. Mark, was so enthusiastic that neither Jesus nor His disciples had time to eat even a morsel of bread. They had brought Him one possessed, who was both blind and dumb: the Master restored to him both sight and speech. The multitude, happy at seeing the young Prophet give so crushing a retort to the calumnies of His adversaries, were in a state of moral exaltation, of joy, of wonderment, which seemed to drive them beyond all self-control, and they cried out: "Is not this the Son of David?"

To this loud acclaim, the jealous fury of the Scribes and Pharisees made answer: "This man casteth not out

[1] *St. Mark* iii, 20, in saying that the crowd came *again*, *πάλιν*, *to the house*, seems to suppose that it is the same place where the paralytic had been cured (ii, 1, 2), that is, the house in which Jesus lodged at Capharnaum, *οἶκος* or *οἰκία*, without the article, viz., Peter's house, where He had already worked so many prodigies (i, 29–34).

devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." [2] No supposition could be less rational; but who is ignorant of the blind credulity of a mob? The most extravagant contradictions, uttered with assurance, are frequently the very ones that produce the liveliest impression. Provided one knows how to shout loud enough, he can gain acceptance for them. Jesus permitted His enemies to go no farther. Checking them with the strength of simple common-sense, He asked them: "How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided and cannot stand, but hath an end." This is simple reasoning; it crushes by its truth and is absolutely irrefutable. A self-destroying Satan is an absurdity.

Moreover, if this argument is not enough, He has another, that goes farther home because it is personal: "Now if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children [3] cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your

[2] Interpreters are divided as to the meaning of the name here given to the prince of the demons. St. Jerome, who gives *Beelzebub*, says that this name, formerly given to the god of the Accaronites (*IV Kings* i, 2), signifies the *god of flies*, either because the Accaronites believed he had the power of delivering them from the flies that devastated the country (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, iv, 9), or because the Jews thus maliciously compared their neighbours' god, *the god of flies*, with their own God, Who was the *God of gods*. See, also, Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 95, the Babylonians' belief in the divining virtue of flies. But the most common reading was *Beelzeboul*, which signifies *god of offal*. For the Jews qualified idolatry as filth, offal, etc., and for the Rabbis to take part in idolatrous worship was *extendere manus in stercorario*. Satan was the king of idolatry (Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, in *Matth.* xii, 24). Some exegetes prefer to see in *Beelzeboul* (*Baal* in Chaldaic, *Beel*, by contraction *Bel*, *the Lord*, and *Zeboul*, *of the dwelling*) the name given by the Phœnicians to their sun-god, master of the heavenly spheres. Cf. Movers, *Phönizier*, i, p. 260.

[3] Before the time of Jesus and without reference to Him, Judaism had exorcists who pretended to cast out evil spirits by certain rather fantastic rites. (*St. Luke* ix, 49; *Acts* xix, 13; *Antiq.*, viii, 2, 5, and vii, 6, 3.) We are free to doubt the reality of this power. What Josephus tells of the

judges." For it was, indeed, only too palpably the outcome of partiality to attribute, without any motive, the latter's works to God and the works of Jesus to the demon. "But if I," continues the Saviour, "by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong? And then he will rifle his house. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils." Such has been the lot of Satan. Having attained the mastery of the world at the very beginning, he reigned over it as over his own house; mankind had erected altars and had built temples to him. In succession, material creation, man's body, and finally man's soul had become his property. Everything underwent not only his moral influence in the habit of evil, but even his physical violent action, in obsession and possession. But now a Stronger than he is come, Who is the Son of God. He begins by vanquishing Satan and binding him, and, then advancing into what had become the house of the devil, He seizes upon all that is there, and that had formerly been His own legitimate property. He takes it, and the vanquished cannot prevent Him, for the Kingdom of God has begun. Such, figuratively, is the history of the Redemption, of the aggressive turning of good against evil, of God against the demon, which they behold and at which they are scandalised.

magician Eleazar looks more like jugglery than like genuine exorcism. The *Talmud, Tanch.*, fol. 70, I, speaks of exorcists who, invoking the names of David and Solomon, enveloped the sick with smoke by burning certain roots, and thus drove out evil spirits. Jesus, citing the example of the Jewish Rabbis, by no means intends to compare their works with His own. He argues not from what these magicians do, but from what the Pharisees think they can do.

After this argumentation, which was absolutely conclusive against the calumnies of His adversaries, Jesus turned to those of the multitude who, having suddenly grown chill in His regard, held a reserved and almost indifferent attitude, and exclaimed: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." Once having known the Saviour, it is no longer possible to be indifferent toward Him. Not to be His friend is to declare one's self His enemy; not to make with Him the conquest of eternal life is to perish in misery. Such will be the misfortune of those whom grace has once enlightened, and whom doubt has turned cold again. Satan has formidable attacks yet to make. He bides his time; it is when the heart is troubled, or when the mind is groping in darkness, that he will seize the favourable chance, and take again with interest that which he had lost. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water [4] seeking rest; and, not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and, entering in, they dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." Thus all that God had accomplished by way of cleansing a soul of its past and of adorning it with new virtues and serious habits, is of no avail. For having remained a moment vacant—that is, without Jesus Christ, Whom doubt has caused to flee—Satan has entered in once more in triumph. His victory will probably be final. So great is the crime of those who, by their daring denials, disturb the faith of believers and lead them

[4] The common opinion was that the desert was the ordinary dwelling-place of demons. (*Job* xxx, 3; *Bar.* iv, 35; *Apoc.* xviii, 2, etc.) Exiled from eternal happiness in the invisible world, it was supposed that they must likewise be banished from the joys of creation in the visible world.

on to ruin. "I say to you," says Jesus, "every sin and every blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven." The Holy Ghost completes in us the full and perfect manifestation of divine truth. He is the light, the evidence that makes God visible to the human conscience. To rebel against this light, to deny this evidence, is moral suicide for man. By this inexcusable act of malice we deaden all religious feeling in our hearts, and deliver ourselves to eternal blindness. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world nor in the world to come."

In doubting the reality of the divine nature of Jesus or of His mission, man may be misled without any obstinate or hateful malice, by a mere aberration of mind or by the influence of certain prejudices that keep him from seeing the light. He is certainly culpable, but his fault is not too great to be forgiven. He has not deliberately intercepted the rays of divine light by a criminal and cold calculation. At the appointed time, when his heart is purer and his mind less troubled, heavenly light may illumine his soul. All is not lost. The wicked man, on the contrary, who, though he sees clearly and without doubt the work of the Holy Ghost, has even then through hatred pronounced it to be the work of Satan, is unworthy of the light of heavenly signs. He stubbornly prefers night, falsehood, evil; he shall have them forever. God pardons weakness of the heart, illusions of the mind, even the wanderings due to pride in those who do not cease to seek a better state; but pure malice of the soul He never forgives, because it removes from the soul all possibility of doing anything to deserve forgiveness. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree evil and its

fruit evil. For by the fruit the tree is known." If the casting out of demons, the healing of the sick, the performance of miracles are good works, it must be admitted that the agent of these good works is good himself, and that he cannot be confused with Satan, the horrible personification of evil. Or, if one is absolutely desirous of regarding Satan as the cause of all these wonders, he must conclude that the wonders themselves are evil. To say that the tree can be good and its fruit evil, or that the fruit can be good and the tree evil, is to deny evidence, it is blasphemy, and inexcusable sin. That is the crime of Jesus' calumniators.

"Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" cries the indignant Master. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The energy with which Jesus hurled all this in the face of the Pharisees amazed all present. They were not aware that their gentle Master was capable of such outbursts of voice, such power of long-restrained indignation; and the Pharisees, in amazement, their masks torn from them by His burning words, could only say: "He is become mad." [5] At this the multitude hastened to Him in even greater numbers, and Jesus took the occasion to accentuate His triumph by continuing to humiliate His enemies with His overwhelming retorts. His success was such that the peo-

[5] The "multitude" is undoubtedly the subject of ἔλεγον and "Jesus" the subject of ἐξέστη. This latter verb signifies a moral exaltation which seems to deprive man of self-control and to render him insane.

ple no longer withheld their admiration; and a certain woman, speaking aloud for all, exclaimed: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck!" Jesus' reply was, "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." The Pharisees, in order to regain the ground they had lost and to check the applause of the multitude, now gave utterance to the following challenge: "Master, we would see a sign from thee." His miracles done on earth appear to them to be open to suspicion. They judge that they may be the work of magic, or the result of some diabolical intervention. Let them be seen in the heavens, and they will agree that they are conclusive, for then they will be from on high, not from below. Then will they truly be heavenly signs, and no longer to be contested. "An evil and adulterous generation," answered Jesus, "seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." [6] Such was His reply to the Pharisees. The true sign of Jonas to the Ninevites was his preaching: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The sign that Jesus gives to Israel is the announcement of His approaching destruction. The prophet's menace suffices for the Ninevites. That of Jesus means nothing to the Jews. He will, therefore, give them one more sign also plainly analogous to that of Jonas, more conclusive than any, but which, however, shall leave the Jewish people still obstinate in their unbelief. Not on

[6] As a matter of fact Our Lord did not pass three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He was among the dead only one day and two nights. Since in reality Jesus' stay in the tomb began the evening before the Sabbath and ended the morning after, the Jews, following their custom, rightfully expressed this space of time in round numbers. See *I Kings* xxx, 12; *II Paralip.* x, 5; compare with xxvi, 12.

high but in the abyss will He show them His sign. Samuel had bidden the thunder resound in defiance of the laws of nature; Elias had drawn down fire from heaven; the Son of Man has kept for Himself the stifling of death itself in the grave by His glorious resurrection. "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man also be to this generation." Jonas, by his miraculous escape from death, served to recall the Ninevites to penance and to salvation. Ought not Jesus' resurrection to be of like efficacy for Israel? The Saviour goes on: "The Queen of the south shall rise in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold more than Solomon here." What was Solomon's knowledge when compared with the works and discourses of Jesus Christ? And yet the Queen of Saba, seeking no extraordinary sign from heaven, hastened over long distances and through the midst of dangers to listen to the heir of David. What, then, shall be the confusion of the Jews for not having recognised the wisdom of the Messiah, which was far more marvellous, and for having demanded proof of Him in signs! But the sign once given by His resurrection, far stranger shall it be to see Israel even yet resist. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas, and behold more than Jonas here."

What, then, can be the cause of this strange obstinacy in the face of truth? Jesus tells it clearly. "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body also will be full of light, but if it be evil, thy body also will be full of darkness." By the eye, indeed, each of our members sees and is guided. The eye itself receives its light from without, but it receives it only in so far as

it itself is pure and sound. So, too, for the interior man there is an eye, the heart, by which the intellect and will are enlightened. If the heart be pure, light is abundant; if it be diseased, depraved, light is feeble, inconstant, and is even withdrawn altogether to leave us in darkest and most perilous night. "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness." This is the greatest woe that can come to man. Vainly shall he struggle in the midst of the most striking of divine revelations; he shall receive no light, because his spiritual eye is incapable of being penetrated. Such is the fate of the Pharisees. Their hearts are not pure; they can see nothing, and all the heavenly signs they may ask, if granted, would not make them see more. They must needs first cleanse their soul's eye, put off their pride, their hypocrisy, their secret sins, their formalist prejudices; then naturally they shall behold the truth, and shall not ask a needless superabundance of light.

Meanwhile, Jesus' family had been made anxious by the rumours that were spreading concerning the tumult of the gathering; and, fearing the danger He might incur by braving a faction no less fanatical than powerful, they hurried to find Him in order to lead Him away.

The presence of Mary on this occasion proves that His relatives had no intention of taking Him away by main force, as some have concluded from St. Mark's expression.[7] They wished merely to induce Him to abandon so perilous a position, by reminding Him that neither He nor His disciples had yet had time to take their repast. The crowd was so dense that the family had to convey their wish to Him by means of intermediaries. They said to Him: "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand with-

[7] Ἐξῆλθον κρατῆσαι αὐτόν.

out, seeking thee." [8] But Jesus, intent on proving that there was a relationship truer, more intimate, and dearer to Him than any earthly bond, merely replied: "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" And, looking about Him, He stretched His hand out toward all the disciples who were eager to receive His instructions, and exclaimed: "Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister and mother!"

He who does the Father's will casts his own life into the very current of the life divine. The bond of perfect dependence which he thus establishes between himself and the Father constitutes a real sonship. From this point of view he becomes truly the brother of Jesus. Such relationship, in that it proceeds from the heavenly Father, is only the more intimate and the more glorious. The Master rightly places it before every other. For is not the soul's life more than the life of the body?

Many of His hearers did not comprehend the depth of what He said. Through all the ages His words have stirred up enthusiasm, and have made him who received and pondered them capable of any sacrifice. Can too much be given for the title of nobility that has made us sons of God and brothers of Jesus Christ?

[8] The absence of Joseph, who is not even mentioned on this occasion, is another proof of the opinion that he was dead.

CHAPTER IV

THE PARABLES ON THE SHORES OF THE LAKE

Why Jesus Begins to Speak in Parables—The Nature of the Parable—The Seed-Sowing and Varieties of Soil — The Master's Detailed Explanation — A Complementary Parable in St. Mark—The Grain of Mustard-Seed — The Leaven — The Cockle Among the Wheat — Jesus' Explanation — The Treasure — The Precious Stone — The Net and the Definitive Separation of the Good from the Wicked—The True Teacher, for the Sake of His Hearers, Varies His Manner of Teaching. (St. Matthew xiii, 1–53; St. Mark iv, 1–34; St. Luke viii, 4–18, and xiii, 18–21.)

Again did Jesus come forth victorious from the conflict, yet it was becoming evident that His enemies would increase their hostility more and more. A crowd is a centre open to all; the evil-disposed are always able to conceal themselves therein, and by their malevolent hints have the power to destroy what the good have built up by force of zeal and patience. Jesus, therefore, perceived the need, while continuing to speak to all, of keeping the final word of His teaching for those alone who were worthy of know-

ing it. The philosophers of old had themselves divided their auditors into two distinct categories,[1] and in addition to their public (*exoteric*) teaching, they were pleased to give a private (*esoteric*) teaching also. Friends deserve some preference. Besides, what Jesus did, took from no one the right to enter, with slight effort, into His whole thought. Truth, as it fell from His lips veiled in pleasing figures, could not, for that reason, be any the less intelligible. Between friends and enemies He made this sole difference, that to the former He proposed to explain His thought in full, if they should prove too dull to perceive it, while to the latter He left the care of seeking it by themselves and the danger of not finding it.

This is why the Saviour began to speak in parables, and this kind of teaching becomes henceforward His ordinary method of expounding the mysteries of the kingdom of God. St. Matthew observes that thus He fulfilled the word of the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world." [2] The parable, as the word indicates,[3] is a kind of problem given to those present. Any problem may conceal the truth from natures too lazy to seek it, but the parable has the advantage of fixing it firmly in the mind of him who has succeeded in understanding it. To produce a parable, some phenomenon of nature or some incident of life was taken, at haphazard, and, in the narration, concealed as beneath a material [4] veil, was the supernatural and transcendent idea meant to be inculcated.

[1] Aulus-Gellius, *N. A.*, xx, 4, tells this of Aristotle.

[2] *Ps.* lxxvii, 2. Here again the Evangelist gives a prophetic sense to the canticle of Asaph the Seer (*II Paralip.* xxix, 30), which ought none the less, it would seem, to be taken in a literal sense.

[3] Παραβάλλω signifies *I propose, I place side by side.* Hence "parable," a problem or a juxtaposition of figure and truth.

[4] The word ὅμοιος or ὁμοιώθη, found at the beginning of each parable in the Gospel, tells clearly enough what a parable is; it is a *similitude.*

The parable, then, differs not only from the fable, but from the allegory as well. The fable is less pretentious in scope, while in form it pays such slight regard to the literal truth that it describes inanimate objects as though they were endowed with sense, and makes even animals talk. In the allegory the symbol identifies itself with the reality symbolised, as when Jesus says allegorically: I am the Door; or, I am the Good Shepherd; whereas in the parable there is always found some further fact apart from the moral teaching which the parabolist has in view. The king, the wheat, the tares, for instance, are things that have a truth of their own independently of the lesson to which they compel attention. In a word, they serve as a term of comparison, and suggest, under the guise of forms drawn from the world about one, the striking moral to be enforced. The genius of the Orientals has always encouraged the language of parable; and it must be acknowledged that it has happily employed it whenever it has succeeded in putting off its own natural exuberance, and has thus avoided useless details. Unity of subject here, as everywhere else, must be maintained; those points of the narration alone are to be put prominently in evidence which are to give a transparent form to the truth as proposed.[5]

As a parable is not an enigma, he who proposes one, with the idea of arousing the attention of his hearers without fatiguing it, ought to permit them to take a provisional glimpse of the line of development he intends to follow in order that they may seize the thought half-veiled, as it were. It is, therefore, usual to announce at the very beginning the idea that is to be explained in parabolic form. Confronted with these two data, the known and the

[5] See Trench, *Notes on the Parables* (London, 1870); B. Bruce, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ* (London, 1882); Goebel, *Die Parabeln Jesu* (Gotha, 1880).

enigmatic, indolent minds, or those of evil intent, are disheartened or go astray, while upright, generous natures feel their attention roused, and set themselves actively to the task which will be completed later by an authorised explanation, if this be needed. Imagination, feeling, intellectual activity are all excited at once, and it may be said that through them the great doors of the soul are opened, and the most abstract doctrines enter in to be graven the more surely for having been the more happily clothed in sensual and attractive forms. Having recourse, therefore, to this interesting method of teaching, the Saviour, with wise forethought, will make the necessary selection among His hearers, and will cause these souls of earth to be permeated with the sublime thoughts of heaven.

His desire must have been to define the present and the future history of God's Kingdom, its victorious struggles against evil no less than its pacific, moral, and, contrary to the Jewish notions of the time, thoroughly spiritual character. He does this in a series of seven parables, transmitted to us by St. Matthew. This number seven, the sum of *three*, the number of the divinity, and *four*, that of humanity, is not without a mystic meaning. Taken as a marvellous whole, these parables show us God uniting Himself to man by His word and by His grace in order to establish, in spite of all obstacles, the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. They were not set forth in quick succession. That would have resulted in an insurmountable obstacle for those minds which already had some difficulty in grasping these problems, one after the other, notwithstanding the detailed solutions by which they had been followed. Jesus had to proceed with greater tact, and, though the points at which He paused are not marked in St. Matthew, we may conclude from a hint in St. Mark [6] that, after hav-

[6] *St. Mark* iv, 10.

ing put forward one parable, the Master always granted His disciples time to search patiently for its hidden meaning. At any rate, the first Synoptic is the only one who thus places them in a group of seven. The second mentions only two, and adds a third which is not in the others. The third Synoptic inserts the parable of the Sower here, but places those of the Mustard-Seed and the Leaven later on.

That He might be the better understood by the multitude, and be free to withdraw at will, He once more entered a boat; from which, fixing His gaze on the numerous audience that was stretched out along the shore, He thus began:

"Behold the sower went out to sow, and whilst he soweth some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate it up. And other some fell upon stony ground where it had not much earth; and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth; and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it; and it yielded no fruit. And some fell upon good ground and brought forth good fruit, that grew up, and increased and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred."[7] Then, raising His voice, the Master spoke His enigmatic summons to the minds of all: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

He has described the varying results of the divine word in souls. Such a subject was well worth the most serious study. His hearers must seek in themselves the application of this parable; and, as the future of the sowing depends on the nature of the soil, it is of supreme importance that each one should endeavour to remove everything likely to hinder the fecundation and full development of the divine germ. Among these instances of sterility it

[7] *St. Mark* iv, 3–9.

will be observed that the first proceeds from two causes, both of which are exterior: the feet of the passers-by who trod upon the seed, and the birds of the air that devoured it. The second, also, has two causes, the one exterior, the heat of the sun, and the other interior, the want of depth of vegetable mould. The third has but one cause, and that wholly interior: the soil is filled with other seeds. There is real fertility only when the earth is neither so hard as practically to be impenetrable, nor so friable as to retard growth, nor so mixed with foreign matter as to destroy all seminal life, but affords good soil free and well prepared.

It is clear that this classification corresponded to the four categories of souls which Jesus discerned among His hearers. By an inspiration as happy as it was natural, He had likened them to the fields of varying degrees of fertility which He saw upon the hillsides. It was from that source that the figure came that clothed His thought and helped to point His parable. It embodied a fresh and living idea which He cast into the midst of the attentive multitude. He then withdrew and left them time to discover its real meaning.

The disciples did not weary their minds with this work. Their perspicacity, besides, was only commonplace. But when they were alone with the Master, they asked Him both the reason for His new manner of teaching, and the explanation of what they had just heard.

To their first question Jesus responded: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but to the others it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore, do I speak to them in parables, to the end that, seeing they may perceive not, and hearing they may hear

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and not understand. So shall the prophecy of Isaias be fulfilled in them, who saith: 'By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.' " [8]

Such, in truth, is the consequence of man's malice and of God's justice. When the sinner wilfully shuts his heart against divine truth, a twofold chastisement falls upon him: his eye is darkened and he sees not even the most brilliant light, or, if he sees it, he does not perceive it. God leaves him, and so despoils the soul of whatever capacity is still left it for the further gift of supernatural life. In this manner is produced the moral phenomenon known as hardening or palsy of the heart. It is not by an anterior act of God's will, as might be thought from the text of Isaias, nor by a final and absolute act, but by a conditional decree, a judgment of His providence, that all this happens. And so the man who has repudiated conversion becomes, by the very spectacle of his moral crassness, a warning that others may profit by. If Jesus inaugurates a new method of instruction, it is because the world was unwilling to understand even His clearer discourses. He withdraws the light; it is the beginning of a punishment which is as yet neither complete nor final. The Jews might still by an effort be able to pierce the surface of the parable, and entreat the divine mercy to return to them in the full manifestation of its truth. If

[8] *Isa.* vi, 9 *et seq.* This text is quoted by St. Matthew alone, and according to the Septuagint. In the prophecy, Isaias has received the command to bring about, by his preaching, the hardening of Israel and its final ruin.

they do it not, it is because their carnal hearts are wholly devoted to death.

As for the faithful, those men of goodwill, who thirst for light, to them the mysteries of God, that is to say the plan of religion, the secrets of the life divine in its relations with that of creatures, will clearly and patiently be explained. "But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. For, amen, I say to you, many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them." This full initiation into the mysteries of heavenly doctrine is granted to the disciples, either because of the good disposition of their hearts, or in view of the part reserved for them in the founding of the Church. What they learn, they shall be called upon to teach. The Master is pleased to intrust to them the talents which they shall have to render fruitful for His sake. For them to be enlightened is to contract the obligation of enlightening others. This obligation is the greatest honour that can be done to man. Under Jesus' rule, and with Him, they shall be the teachers of mankind.

Then, replying to their second question, concerning the sense of the parable, Jesus manifests His benevolence and patience toward His own true proselytes.

"The seed is the word of God," He says. Between the grain sown in the furrow and the truth of God implanted in souls there is, indeed, much similarity of growth. If nothing happens to check their native activity, both must produce life and its abundant fruits. The first and veritable sower is the Son of God, the Word of the Father, Who casts Himself upon the world like good grain, first by His Incarnation, and then by His word. After Him, there are other sowers sent by Him; these are they who

spread on earth the teachings of His Gospel. "And they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart lest believing they should be saved." These dissipated souls, exposed to every impression, to all the winds of heaven, and long since hardened also beneath the feet that trample on them, are wholly incapable of receiving the divine teachings with profit. The fecundating influence of grace and the workings of conscience have ceased to move them. And, therefore, by failing to open the soil of the heart for the assimilation of the divine seed, they leave it exposed. Soon the world with its hurly-burly, its noisy distractions, its dangerous maxims, and the demon, who is king of this world, the hater of God's word, kill or remove these germs of life. Thus sealed to heaven and all open to earth, these wretched souls become laden with new responsibility and new guilt, without hope of resurrection or salvation. "Now they upon the rock[9] are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no roots; for they believe for a while and in time of temptation they fall away." These superficial minds are alas! but too numerous. In them glowing imagination and a very intense impressionism take the place of depth and solidity. They grasp the truth with eagerness, as they do any other novelty held out to them. They surprise us by the excess of their first fervour, but the fervour will not endure. Beneath their superficial refinement there is a fundamental hardness, self-love and pride, that cannot sustain true life. Nothing could be more ephemeral than the harvest that ripens in such a soil. It has not, nor can it have, any root. The first temptation will devour it like the burning sun; the first scandal will uproot it like an impetuous wind. It is

[9] St. Luke thus characterises them. If the fields were merely rocky, the roots could still gain a hold between the pebbles.

only inexperience that will look for fruit from such a life. Imagination divorced from reason, sentimentality without conviction will never make a true Christian.

"And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit." These apparently well-disposed hearts, too, are quite numerous; but they are divided between God and the world, and, notwithstanding their rich and fertile soil, they will produce nothing. The cares of life, the goads of concupiscence, the unchecked desire for the deceitful riches of earth are so many cruel thorns that spring up in them, increasing and multiplying and forming an impenetrable thicket wherein the good seed will die imprisoned. The bushes, as they grow, hide it from the sun, and by multiplying their roots, they dispute with it the enriching power of the soil. What will then be left it as an element of life? Nothing. It will, therefore, perish miserably. Why has not the soul, that has beheld and even accepted the truth, the courage to follow it and by so doing insure its own salvation? This is the mystery of evil. Distracted, beset on all sides, tormented by violent passions, it will see its earliest effort spend itself in miserable sterility.

"But that on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." The fecundity of these pure, noble souls is beautiful and consoling. Happily endowed by nature, exercised in a continual moral effort, freed from all earthly preoccupations, and made ready by grace, they delight and glorify the heavenly Sower.

This is the entire story of the Kingdom of God in its beginnings, its abrupt endings, its growth. It takes root only in hearts that are naturally good, responsive, and sincere. All others it barely touches in passing by. It leaves

them barren and dead, because it finds them unworthy of the gift of life. But once having fallen upon good ground, the divine word labours therein, alone, so to speak, and fructifies by the sheer force of its own virtue. This is what Jesus gives His Apostles to understand in a short parable found in St. Mark,[10] but not mentioned by St. Matthew, it would seem, because those he gives already contain it in their general meaning.

"When a man has sown his seed," says the Master, "whether he is asleep or awake, night or day, germination will go on without his knowing how, and the earth will put forth, first the blade, then the ear, and last of all the full corn in the ear." When the grain is ripe there is nothing more for him to do but to come with his sickle; it is harvest-time. God's word, it is true, moves virtuous souls, though they know it not. They are frequently anxious because they do not perceive their advance in virtue. Theirs is like the impatience of the husbandman who would wish to see suddenly ripe upon the ear the grain he has just cast into the earth. We must learn to moderate our eagerness, to let God's grace pursue its gradual work, at times imperceptible, but ever certain. It will bring the fruit to maturity, if we do nothing to render the soil bad or the development of the germ impossible. In His mercy and paternal care God never wearies of labouring in the depths of souls who love Him, and of putting in them the power "both to will and to accomplish," as says St. Paul.[11] As, in the furrow, the grain which is at first warmed, then, in turn, moistened, softened, and developed, mysteriously takes root, and afterward springs up triumphant from the ground, being transformed, multiplied, and ripened with no further effort on the husbandman's part, so the religious life is born in the heart, is rooted there, and

[10] Cf. *St. Mark* iv, 26–29. [11] *Philip.* ii, 13.

then leaps forth to multiply and spread by the most astonishing works of charity, gradually opening into the full maturity of a sanctity admired of earth, and, in the end, rewarded of heaven. The true and faithful man has only to remain good—for this is an indispensable condition—and to let things take their course. He may sleep in peace; a fine harvest is assured him. God, the great and mighty Worker, watches for him, and His benediction will be able to satisfy our greatest desires.

Thanks to God's persevering, energetic, intimate action upon His faithful, the Church, surmounting all obstacles, must complete the conquest of the whole world and become God's Kingdom made visible on earth. Her development will present a twofold character of sudden grandeur and of victorious though latent universality, which must be well understood. It is a proof of the divinity of her Founder. That the idea of it might be conceived, Jesus expounded two other parables, one of which, concerning the grain of mustard-seed, sets forth the miracle of the interior development of the Church, and the other, regarding the leaven, the amazing power of her intimate influence on the mass of mankind.

"To what shall we liken the Kingdom of God, or to what parable shall we compare it?" He asked. "It is as a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that are in the earth. And when it is sown it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof." The smallness of the grain of charlock or mustard-seed was proverbial among the Jews;[12] but this invisible seed has an extraordinary vegetative force. In Palestine the mustard-plant

[12] *St. Luke* xvii, 6.

sometimes attains the proportions of a little fig-tree.[13] Birds in flocks, in search of food, alight on it. Hanging from the sides of a rock, it may be, one of these hardy shrubs attracted, at the moment, the Saviour's attention. He took from it the lively antithesis which He wished to set forth, and, sacrificing the emblem of the cedar which Ezechiel had selected in the prophecy [14] to which this parable alludes, He looked for His analogue in something infinitely small. This was essential in order to prove how nothing can become everything under God's inspiration. The scarcely perceptible grain of mustard-seed is no other than this very Man Who for thirty years lived on, humble, ignored, misunderstood in the shop at Nazareth, Whose only helpers are twelve unknown, ignorant, despised men, and Who to-morrow is to die a most infamous death. But, within itself, this small seed has incomparable warmth and life. In vain will they endeavor to shut it up in a grave. It will shoot forth, and, breaking through the ground, will send out from its heart a tree that shall astonish the world by its luxuriant vegetation. This tree is the Church; among its branches shall come for rest and nutrition the great souls that scorn the earth, and seek to live in the higher regions of religious knowledge, of holiness, and of the life divine. For nineteen centuries we may say that no great sentiment, no grand idea, no sublime devotion has been in the world without seeking a shelter beneath this mystic tree and without finding in its branches its sweetest joys and best inspirations.

Parallel with this rapid and visible extension of the Kingdom of God, the hidden and deep-set transformation of mankind will take place. Again Jesus said: "Where-

[13] *Hieros. Peah*, fol. 20, 2: R. Simeon ben Colaphta says: "Caulis sinapis erat mihi in agro meo, in quam ego scandere solitus eram ut scandere solent in ficum."

[14] *Ezech.* xvii, 22.

unto shall I esteem the Kingdom of God to be like? It is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,[15] till the whole was leavened." It is an essential property of leaven to penetrate the entire mass in which it is placed. It causes a general fermentation and insures for the bread the porousness and the lightness that constitute its excellence. Jesus, or, if one prefers, the Christian teaching, is the leaven of the moral life here below. The woman who puts this leaven in the three measures of meal is the Church which, for nineteen hundred years, developes the dominion of the Saviour and disseminates His doctrines in the three parts of the ancient world, or among the three great races of humanity, until all is fermented, raised, and transformed. The work is not yet near its end. The secret influence still goes on. Unbelief declares, in vain, that Christ is vanishing from the world. He goes on before it and every day gains new ground. Every hour there is some soul generous enough to carry to a greater distance the sacred leaven of the Gospel into some corner of the globe, and mankind is unconsciously overrun. Even those who think to do naught in behalf of Christianity, they, too, for various reasons stir up the inert mass of paganism and of barbarism; and, though they seek only to broaden the confines of civilisation, it is the dominion of Jesus Christ that they assist in developing.

It is unfortunate that this triumph of the Church, assured in future time, does not exclude all base alloy from the Christian society in the present. There will be always some good and some wicked. The glorious coming of Jesus Christ will be realised despite this interior obstacle permitted by God. Therefore we may not retire to our repose in dangerous optimism and tell ourselves that since

[15] Three measures of flour was the ordinary quantity kneaded at a time by the Jews. (*Gen.* xviii, 6.)

we are enrolled in the Kingdom of God here below, we are, therefore, good and shall be of the Kingdom on high. One may be in the Church and be a sinner; we may wear the livery of a Christian and be reprobate; the patience of God in this life does not prevent His justice in the life to come; on the contrary, it the more forcibly evokes it. Another parable tells us this.

"The Kingdom of Heaven," Jesus says again, "is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle [16] among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house, coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And then the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."

This figurative narration contained something particularly lively, both as a dialogue and as a portrayal of rustic customs. The disciples became very eager to learn its meaning. We little understand, in our day, in our civilised countries, the craven criminality of the wretch who scatters bad grain in his neighbour's furrow; but

[16] Some think that the word ζιζάνιον signifies in general any plant injurious to the harvest. Others consider it a question, here, of false oats, the *infelix lolium* of Virgil (*Ecl.*, v, 37). But most interpreters claim that it treats here of a plant quite common in Palestine, whose kernel is somewhat similar to that of wheat. Its growth is much the same as that of real grain. It is only when the growth is completed that the injurious herb is distinguished by its fruit.

Roman law provided for it, and travellers tell us that it is still done in some countries in the Orient. The East-Indian, in particular, threatens to sow in his enemy's cultivated lands the *perum-pirandi* which would render a harvest impossible for several years. He watches for a favourable opportunity, and so succeeds in his criminal work as to throw a whole family into despair and most awful want.[17] But who is the wretch that can seek to introduce evil into the Kingdom of God? What means this separation and these varying destinies of the cockle and of the wheat in the time of the harvest? The disciples were impatient in their desire to know. The soul that is being initiated into divine truth feels itself greedy of light, and all its desires are for a full revelation. Here, in particular, interest was the more pressing, as the grave question of the last end of man and of the diverse forms of future life seemed to have been raised.

As soon as He had dismissed the multitude and had re-entered the house, Jesus was again assailed with questions by His disciples. They would know the full meaning of the parable which they had heard. With the touching kindness of a master or of a father teaching his children, He said: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man and the field is the world; and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; and the cockle are the children of the wicked one; and the enemy that sowed them is the Devil." The disastrous activity of evil is therefore met at every step in life together with that of good.

Jesus sows in the universe—which is indeed His field since He created it—the race of the just. He does His work painfully in the full light of the sun, with suffering and with love. Satan accomplishes his like a traitor in the dark at one stroke—for evil is done more swiftly than

[17] Roberts, *Oriental Illustrations*, p. 541.

good—and with hate. The errors, the moral unworthiness, the hypocrisy that lie hidden in the bosom of the Church, remain for a time unperceived, until at last events show forth the true children of God and His enemies, the good and the bad. One may discern them even in this life, and the outraged zeal of the toilers of the Gospel would willingly ask prompt justice. But the Master of the world wills it not. He knows how to be patient, because He is eternal, and, in our own behalf, He determines to employ forbearance. How many sinners would never have become good, if the hand of God had suddenly stricken them in their malice! And even when they are not converted, is it not evident that they serve to exercise the virtue of the just and to glorify it? As He awaits in patience the day of the harvest, God manifests His goodness, His wisdom, and His eternity. "But the harvest is the end of the world," says Jesus, "and the reapers are the Angels. Even as cockle, therefore, is gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world; the Son of Man shall send His Angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It is worth while, for awfully decisive for every one shall be that moment when the Angels shall separate, in the immense harvest of mankind laid low beneath the scythe of death, the elect and the damned.

These portrayals of eternal pain, as well as of eternal reward, appear here neither for the first time nor for the last. The very insistence with which they are reproduced proves that they are not merely a sport of the imagination. There shall be as great despair in falling among these horrible woes, pictured by eternal fire, as there shall

be holy joy in entering into that glory of which the brightness of the sun is but an imperfect image. Hell for some, heaven for others; the groanings of exile for the former, the joys of fatherland for the latter. It is a question of supreme importance.

Hence, Jesus, by two more parables, would have us know that we must endeavour, at any price, to become true citizens of the heavenly Kingdom. Cost what it may, we must get ourselves incorporated therein, and by keeping our place honourably in time, we shall deserve to dwell there for eternity.

"The Kingdom of Heaven," He says, "is like unto a treasure hidden in a field; which a man, having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." It is not the procedure by which the proprietor of the field is deprived of his right to the treasure, that is here recommended, but only the ardour displayed by him who, having found the treasure, endeavours to gain possession of it. Likewise the soul, having seen its religious ideal in the Gospel, should hasten to sacrifice both its repose and its pleasures, its position and its fortune, to follow after it and to attain it. What matters all the rest if the treasure is everything for the soul? The Jewish people had this incomparable treasure; they had it in their lands; but they suspected it not. The Gentiles more happily came upon it one day suddenly, unexpectedly, beneath the feet of their triumphant hordes. At a glance they knew its inappreciable value, and, casting off their false wisdom, their false pleasures, their false gods, they bought this divine deposit from the obstinately blinded Jews; they became the proprietors and have forever supplanted the faithless synagogue which is rejected of God.

"Again," says Jesus, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like

to a merchant seeking fine pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had, and bought it." Such, also, should be the prudence of the philosopher, of the man of meditation, who spends all the strength of his mind in the search for truth. When, by the study of the contents of Christianity he has obtained a view of its sublime harmony, when the evidence of the Gospel argument has shone like a diamond to his experienced eye, he has only to close his books, to put an end to his search, to lay aside all pride, and to enjoy the incomparable treasure that grace has put beneath his hand. He has found light for his understanding, a rule for his will, consolation for his heart. To what do all those vanities now amount, which up to this moment had misled his life? Justin quits his philosopher's cloak; Augustine leaves his rhetorician's chair. They have found the precious stone; they have sold all to buy it, and their consolation is in the knowledge that on entering into eternity, while nothing else shall be of any value, the pearl they carry in their hands shall suffice to purchase for them a life of bliss.

It is with His disciples' minds filled with this thought of eternity that Jesus desires to leave them. In a final parable which He draws from an incident in the life of fishermen, of which they perhaps were witnesses—nothing was better suited to the character of His hearers, fishermen by profession and future fishers of men, than such language—He speaks once more of the varying destinies that await the good and the bad after death.

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kinds of fishes; which, when it was filled, they drew out, and, sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth."

This will be the final result of the preaching of the

Gospel. The net, or seine, much longer than it is wide, furnished with floats at the top and weights at the bottom, which the fishermen cast into the sea, and drag in the depths of the waters by ropes attached to the extremities, is the Gospel which the Apostles, God's valiant workers, patiently draw through all the world. It reaches everywhere, even to the regions of the humble classes. In its meshes it encloses every kind of fish, men of every race, of every tongue, of every condition, good and bad. To those who are taken the Church gives the mark, the name, the law of the Christian, whatever their age, though she is not always able to discover their interior dispositions. They live all together, under the law of the Gospel, some indifferent, some even perverse. In the meantime the Angels of God insensibly draw the net to land; they lift the fine catch forth from the overflowing sea of the world, out of its deep waters, where evil is easily confused with good, and cast it surprised and shuddering upon the banks of eternity. There the great selection takes place. That which is good they gather in with care, while they reject with scorn what is worthless. These experienced servants make no mistakes. No merely apparent virtue, neither prodigies nor clever hypocrisy, can save the wicked. The separation will be fatal and definitive. Here once more the furnace of fire awaits the guilty, and they shall groan therein forever.

"Have ye understood all these things?" said the Master. The disciples responded: "Yes." And it would have been difficult to present to them in more tangible form these great laws of the supernatural order that govern the destiny of the world. The Master, content with their reply, was overjoyed at the result obtained, and advised the Apostles to be careful to vary their teaching, later on, so that it might be within the grasp of their hearers.

He said: "Therefore every scribe, instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven, is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old." Thus the true messenger of the Good-Tidings, in order to vary his teaching with profit, shall have at his disposal the complete science of the Old and the New Testament. He can faithfully expound the commandments of the Law and those of the Gospel, to demonstrate all the Messianic prophecies and their providential fulfilment. Such is the variety of substance in the hands of the true teacher. To this will be added, according to circumstances, men, and times, variety of form. One epoch differs from another in its tastes, in its intellectual culture, in its tendencies. Of all kinds of Gospel-preaching, those only are to be condemned that do no good. It is for the man of God to judge if he must introduce a new method of exposition into a new society, as Lacordaire so successfully essayed among the men of his time and nation, or if it be better to revive the past with its more simple homiletic teaching and its more practical and more pious considerations. The truth of the Gospel lends itself to each kind. It is enough that the Apostle should have it sufficiently matured in his heart, in advance, in order to be able to present it, in turn, with a wealth of figures, with logical energy, with the simplicity of ordinary colloquial speech. In this way he will prove his piety, as well as his knowledge and his close union with God, even more than his talent.

Jesus, having completed these parables which constituted the whole body of His doctrine concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, left Capharnaum and the shores of the lake and resumed His apostolic journeyings.

CHAPTER V

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE

A New Apostolic Journey into Galilee—The Women Who Follow Jesus—Their Devotion—The Master Determines to Introduce the Twelve to the Works of the Apostolate—The Wise Instructions He Gives Them—To Do Good to the Man of God Will Be the Same as to Do It to God Himself—The Apostles Depart, Two by Two, and Work Wonders. (St. Luke viii, 1–3, and ix, 1–6; St. Matthew x, 1–15, 40–42; St. Mark vi, 7–13.)

Here begins another series of journeys in Galilee, the details of which are completely unknown to us. Jesus went from town to town, from borough to borough, the Evangelists[1] say, instructing the people in the synagogues, preaching the coming of the Messianic Kingdom, and healing the sick that were brought to Him.

It was a picturesque and beautiful sight: the travelling Church like a blessed caravan, bearing here and there, together with the Good-Tidings, the rich treasures of heaven. A few of the Apostles went on before as heralds to announce the coming of the Great Prophet. Some pious women, on foot or mounted on quiet mules, followed the glorious expedition and aided it as much by their resources

[1] *St. Matt.* ix, 35; *St. Mark* vi, 6; *St. Luke* viii, 1.

as by their thoughtful solicitude. Their presence could not constitute a danger to the Apostolic circle.

When one has come to know a woman's soul in its utmost depths, and has had to manifest pity for her; when one has raised her from her disgrace, restored her to virtue, and, above all, introduced her to the higher life of grace, there is nothing to apprehend from her constant presence. She deems herself inferior to her benefactor, and by that very fact, like a bee disarmed, she has lost her disastrous goad; vanity no longer whispers to her the desire of pleasure, and gratitude removes all thought of victory or of conquest. Then, into the soul comes the sweet, calm sentiment of friendship which unfailingly excludes passion with its violence and its danger. She loves faithfully, devotedly, and with incomparable tenderness. No longer able to do man harm, she aids him with a patience that nothing wearies and with a generosity that knows no bounds.

All the women who followed Jesus had been healed by Him of some moral or physical ill. The first one named is Mary Magdalen. We know the powerful motives of her gratitude; the unfortunate woman had been delivered from seven demons, that is, delivered from the yoke of the passions that stained her youth and dishonoured her life. After her came Joanna, the wife of Chusa a steward of King Herod, it may be, that officer of the court who, having obtained from Jesus the cure of his son, had become a believer together with all his house;[2] Susanna, of whom the Gospel history gives no information, and several others, who, later on, grouped at the foot of the cross, or hurrying to the door of the sepulchre, will prove, to the shame of the Apostles, that a woman's heart, in its affections, knows not the inconstancy that sometimes dishonours the heart of man.

[2] *St. John* iv, 53.

These holy friends, according to the little information which we have concerning them, belonged for the most part to the wealthier class of Jewish society, yet they were not without an admixture of democracy; for although Joanna had lived in Herod's court, Salome, the mother of James and John, was married to a fisherman who had hired assistants, and Mary of Cleophas was in all probability the wife of a simple artisan. Mary Magdalen was of an honourable family of Bethany, of which we shall learn something later on.[3] All together assisted Jesus and His Apostles in their needs whenever honourable hospitality failed to come to their aid in the material difficulties of life. It was part of the divine plan that the Messiah should live here below on the charity of the people. The Apostolic community had a treasury in which were placed the alms given them, and from which they drew in order to supply the needs of the poor. But the most certain resource was ever the hearts of these deserving women who had devoted themselves to the work of fulfilling for the Master and His disciples the duties of mothers and sisters.

The details of this new Apostolic journey into Galilee are wanting; but we know that Jesus must have been impressed with the vast proportions of the religious movement provoked by the Good-Tidings. He could not be everywhere at the same time to do and to preach, and, moreover, the hour was at hand when He must transfer to Judea and to Jerusalem itself His work in the preaching

[3] It is surprising not to find Mary, the Mother of Jesus, among these names. It may be, however, that this is an oversight, occasioned we know not how, in the Synoptic tradition; an oversight again met with in the enumeration of the women present on Calvary, but for which St. John afterward more than makes amends. It may be, again, that, a retired and silent life being better suited to Mary's contemplative soul, this saintly Mother preferred through humility to refrain from accompanying her Son in His triumphs, though later on she most jealously followed Him even in His deepest humiliations.

of the Gospel. He determined to associate His disciples more directly in His own labours. It was not in vain that they had received the title of Apostle. How could they prepare themselves for their future mission more profitably than under the Master's eye?

Jesus therefore solemnly called them together and, explaining the conditions in which they are to labour, said to them: "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [4] The Jews are to be the sole object of their first Apostolate. For the present, the evangelisation of the pagans would be beyond their strength. They must await the coming of the Holy Ghost and His creative work at Pentecost before they undertake so great a conquest. Even the Samaritans, the middle term between Israel and the Gentiles, offered insurmountable obstacles to inexperienced zeal. Great, indeed, will be the gain if the Apostles succeed in effecting in some of their compatriots the religious transformation that has revolutionised their own lives. This result does not seem impossible, for, while between paganism and the new religion there is an abyss, between this latter and Judaism there is a visible connection, and the transition would be most natural.

Besides, in addition to this presumed insufficiency of the Apostles, there is another motive that inspires Jesus' recommendation. For Judaism alone He has destined the first-fruits of the Gospel. For Judaism first of all the light rises in the heavens. Only after the Jews may the Gentiles profit by it. The sons of the patriarchs, the

[4] This recommendation is omitted in *St. Mark* vi, 8, as well as in *St. Luke* ix, 3. In the latter the omission is accidental and by no means inspired by universalist tendencies. This restriction being only provisional, the two Evangelists attach no importance to it, and St. Matthew, who notes it, will tell later on (xxviii, 19) in what terms Jesus withdrew it.

children of the prophets cannot be deprived of their birthright. Before all others, theirs is the privilege of being invited to receive the religious heritage of their fathers, to enjoy the fulfilment of the ancient promises made to Israel.

The theme of the Apostles' preaching is as follows: "And going, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." They have only to make an announcement, to spread the tidings, to bear witness, to attract the attention and dispel the indifference of all. To teach the word of truth magisterially, would as yet be impossible to them; for one can give only what he has, and they, scarcely acquainted with the rudiments of Christian life, can neither define its conditions nor make known its elements. Their work is to announce: "The Messiah is come." To gain credit for their assertion, they will perform miracles. "Heal the sick," adds Jesus . . . "cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." By this sign, the miracle, the guarantee of truth given by God to human words, men shall see that they are not liars. By their disinterestedness they shall be known as men serving no human intention, but following a higher inspiration. "Freely have you received, freely give." By accepting money they would degrade the Apostolic ministry. Providence will care for the heralds of the Good-Tidings. God takes upon Himself the keeping of His servants. "Do not possess gold," the Master continues, "nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff;[5] for the workman is worthy of his hire." In

[5] Were we to repeat the word *two* before shoes and staff, we should do away with the apparent divergency between St. Mark and St. Matthew. In the latter Gospel the Saviour means: "Take nothing more than what you already have, no other shoes, no other staff"; in the former: "What you now have with you will suffice, the shoes on your feet, the staff in your hand," etc. The text of St. Luke (ix, 13) is more difficult. This is probably another of those unimportant inaccuracies which we must admit in

return for the truth he brings, the Apostle will receive the material help necessary that he may live.

"And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy." The Apostle honours him with whom he lodges. "Wheresoever you shall enter into a house, there abide till you depart from that place." Any change would denote a desire of comfort and a certain inconstancy of character unworthy in a man of God, and besides would wound the feelings of the host, whom he would seem to disdain. The true labourer of the Gospel is content with what he has at hand, seeking nothing better, believing that God in His mercy had prepared this for him. He would hesitate to substitute for the will of his Heavenly Father his own pleasant personal preferences.

"And when you come into the house, salute it, saying, Peace be to this house; and if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it." If the family respond to the blessing pronounced upon it, if by its virtues it merit receiving the man of God, the Apostle's wish is accomplished, and heaven's benediction is fulfilled. "But if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you." The Apostles shall keep the divine favours for some more hospitable and better-disposed people. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet[6] for a testi-

the sacred text, unless we read *ράβδους*, as in *St. Matthew*, and not *'ράβδον*, as in *St. Mark;* but the absolute negative *μηδέν* renders this reading inadmissible. However, although the terms differ, the idea is the same in all three Gospels: "No preparation for the journey; go as you are with God's protection."

[6] The Jews were accustomed to shake the dust from their shoes when they had walked on pagan ground. The places inhabited by Gentiles were as vile as the Gentiles themselves. In Jewish casuistry there are ridiculously severe prescriptions regarding this. See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, in *St. Matt.* x, 14. Jesus means here that the faithless Israelite must be for the Apostle like a veritable pagan, and that his crime is abominable in God's sight. St. Paul obeyed these precepts. (*Acts* xiii, 15; xviii, 6.)

mony against them. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." Nothing reaches the Master's heart more sensibly than the welcome given to His disciples. If closing against them the door of the house or the gates of the city is a crime, giving them a cordial welcome will be a meritorious act. "He that receiveth you," again says Jesus, "receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of the prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet." To nourish him, to shelter him, to clothe him is to aid him in the fulfilment of his mission, to have a share in his labours and, consequently, in his merits. "And he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man." How often this thought has opened the heart and the treasury of the rich to the servants of God, seeking assistance for their projects! The Master's word has pleaded for them and, thanks to the generous souls who have heard it, their goodwill, their faith, their devotion have been enabled to realise the most sublime dreams of charity and of religion.

And, finally, with a deep feeling of tenderness for these humble disciples who go joyously to inaugurate their Apostolate, but whose coming trials He clearly perceives, He exclaims: "And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

For a first, tentative mission, which was to be brief and free from danger, these instructions were sufficient. Moreover, the attitude of the Galilean towns whither the Apostles were going was, for the most part, encouraging. Any messenger who announced the Messiah would be wel-

comed there. Later on, when the seventy disciples themselves are sent upon their mission, we shall study the Master's words of advice for times of persecution. Then they shall come from His lips most naturally, since the storm will surround the little flock on all sides. It will seem only reasonable that the Shepherd, after having told of the woes that await Himself, should speak of the trials reserved for His representatives.[7]

The Apostles, therefore, departed two by two, as Jesus had recommended.[8] They did this as a means of mutual help and of giving authoritative testimony to the truth; for the law recognised as true the depositions of two witnesses who agreed. When the moon of Nisan appeared in the sky, two men went and presented themselves before the Sanhedrim to attest that they had seen it, and, on their affirmation, the beginning of the new year was proclaimed. It was right that the Apostles also should be sent in twos, as witnesses who were to announce to a city the rising of the sun of justice and the commencement of the Gospel era.

The Apostles spread rapidly in all directions, preaching repentance and preparing hearts for the approach of the Kingdom of God. They were readily welcomed, and nothing failed them.[9] They exorcised demons and healed many that were sick. The better to arouse the faith of the infirm, they had recourse, according to St. Mark, to an outward sign, the anointing with oil. Doubtless, the Master had so commanded. Besides, He Himself did not

[7] St. Matthew has put all this together because, passing over the later sending of the seventy disciples, he found trouble in otherwise distributing those important instructions which he did not wish to sacrifice. Again, it is well known that he took pleasure frequently in summing up in one discourse such teachings as were analogous, although given at different times. St. Luke, in this discourse at least, puts each in its own place.

[8] *St. Mark* vi, 7, is alone in observing that they were to go two by two; but the lists of Apostles all seem to be made in view of this arrangement.

[9] We learn this from a word that Jesus uttered during the Last Supper. (*St. Luke* xxii, 35.)

hesitate at times to move the senses that He might reach the soul, and to employ a material element that He might awaken faith in those whom He desired to heal. When He made use of His own spittle to open the eyes of a blind man or to loose the tongue of one deaf and dumb, it was solely to supply, by this physical contact, the moral influence which His look or His word could not produce. Likewise the Apostles, by applying oil to the bodies of the sick, sought to arouse religious dispositions in their souls. And thus they prepared the miraculous cure signified by the anointing.

Their mission was not fruitless. The religious movement was seen to grow more and more in Galilee. From this agitation there came forth new recruits to the nascent Church. Jesus received them with joy and patiently undertook their religious formation. But the march of events was not to leave Him for long the leisure to pursue this work of edification.

The Apostolic group itself will claim His chief efforts, for it must be disciplined in all haste, by drill, both in retreat and in resistance, before it shall be led to the decisive combat in the capital of Judea.

Section III

Jesus Disciplines His Church

CHAPTER I

HEROD ORDERS JOHN THE BAPTIST TO BE PUT TO DEATH

Popular Opinion Regarding Jesus—Herod's Terror—How Two Women, Herodias, the Adulteress, and Salome, the Dancer, Induced Him to Sentence the Precursor to Death—The Baptist's Head on a Charger—Herod Would See Jesus—Danger of Sedition—The Withdrawal to Philip's Territory. (St. Mark vi, 14–16 and 21–29; St. Matthew xiv, 1 and 6–12; St. Luke ix, 7–9.)

After the mission of the Apostles the name of Jesus was more than ever upon the lips of all. It reached even the ears of Herod, who at once became anxious.[1] This

[1] For at least a year Jesus had been agitating the multitudes in Galilee and had been accomplishing prodigious works at the gates of Tiberias; how is it to be explained, then, that Herod had not yet paid any attention to Him? Probably the Saviour had commenced His public life at the very time when the tetrarch was detained either at Rome to defend his interests in the presence of the Emperor, or on the Arabian frontier to check the hostilities of Aretas. Besides, we are aware that it was not characteristic of this sceptical and voluptuous prince to bother himself with the religious questions that might be disturbing his subjects, unless public order was thereby troubled. The Herods much preferred to let the sects and the Rabbis engage in discussion as long as they did not refuse to pay taxes and were not disobedient to the government. Hence, when John the Baptist was thrown into prison, it was because he directly accused the person of the tetrarch.

prince, always hesitating between the hatred that Herodias stirred up in him against John the Baptist and the fear of the people which protected the venerable prisoner, had finally committed a great crime.

The ordinary punishment of criminals is to be pursued pitilessly by the memory of their victims, and to live as if they already felt the avenging arm which even in this life begins to seize upon them. Everything conspires to excite in them continual terror. Conscience instinctively echoes the most extravagant suppositions of the multitude. Jesus' reputation spread from day to day, and those who did not know His history and who, perhaps, had never seen Him, said: "John the Baptist is risen again from the dead; and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him." Others chose to believe that it was Elias who had come back to earth, or a prophet of olden times. Herod was struck above all by the words of the former, and his terror inclined him to share their opinion. "It is John," he cried out, "John, whom I beheaded; he is risen again from the dead." And he sought an opportunity to see the Thaumaturgus of whom everybody was talking. It may be that in his heart he had a vague desire to prove either that the dead do not come back, or that, if John has come back, his crime is in part repaired.

The wretched man had ordered the Baptist to be put to death in peculiarly odious circumstances. The Evangelists have given us a dramatic account of it.

It was the very day on which the prince was celebrating the anniversary either of his birth or of his accession to power.[2] The nobles of his court, the generals of his

[2] The text γενεσίοις γενομένοις has been variously interpreted. For some, it signifies the anniversary *of the birth*, which the ancients celebrated with solemnity. (*Gen.* xl, 20; *II Mach.* vi, 7.) In this sense Josephus (*Antiq.*, lib. xii, 4, 7) uses it when he speaks of the great personages of Syria,

army, and the leading personages of the country had been invited to his table. At the conclusion of the banquet there were mimic scenes, lascivious dances, intended to excite the evil passions of the banqueters. The Rome of Cicero had long practised these unhealthy exhibitions.[3] The Rome of the Cæsars spread them over the world together with all the rest of their immorality. Herod the Elder had established a theatre in his palace and a circus in Jerusalem. It is not surprising that his son, a vassal yet more servile than the father, had set himself the task of imitating the dissolute morals of his masters. To enliven the brilliancy of the feast, the daughter of Herodias,[4] the young Salome, forgetful of what she owed to the memory of her own father, presented herself upon the scene. Cleverly reared in the school of crime and of seduction, she achieved a great success. The prince, already heated by the fumes of wine, sought to respond to the applause of the guests and to testify to his own satisfaction by offering to grant the young girl whatever she might desire. Calling her to his side, he said to her: "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, though it be the half of my kingdom." This was offering much for little. From the imprudence of these words we may see that the tetrarch's head was

who celebrated the *birthday of the King's sons*. For others, following *I Kings* xiii, 11, and *Ps.* ii, 7, it means the anniversary *of the accession to the throne*. (Comp. *Dion Cass.*, xlvii, 18.) In this case, the murder of the Baptist would here be in its proper place chronologically, for we are approaching the Paschal time, and, Herod the Great having died about seven days before the Passover, Antipas would celebrate his accession at about this very time. In fact, it is not unusual for the word γενέσια to signify the day on which a prince ascended the throne. (See Herodotus. iv, 26, and Suicer, *Thesaurus*, i, p. 746.)

[3] Cicero, *Pro Murena*, c. 6: "Tempestivi convivii, amœni tori, multarum divitiarum comes est extrema saltatio." (See Horace, *Od.*, iii, 5, 21.)

[4] Salome was the child of Herodias, the daughter of Herod the Great and Berenice, by her first husband, whom she had shamefully abandoned. This was Herod-Philip, son of Mariamne. For the strange history of this family of Herod, see M. de Saulcy's book, *Hist. d'Hérode* (Paris, 1867).

affected. It may be that he thought to keep his promise with some rich present on the occasion of the approaching wedding of Salome and Philip, Tetrarch of Ituræa. Unconsciously, the wretched man had promised a crime.

The young girl went out for a moment to consult with her mother about the request she should make. So generous a promise falling from the royal lips was embarrassing. Herodias quickly decided the question and herself dictated the response. The guilty mother, fearing only that she might be repudiated when, in Herod's soul, the voice of the Baptist had become stronger than passion, could have but one desire, that of suppressing every danger by the suppression of this advocate of public morality. She had long contended with the obstinate refusal of the tetrarch her seducer. The latter, as we have said elsewhere, hesitated at this final crime, as much through veneration of the imprisoned prophet as through fear of a popular uprising. At last he was to be overcome. Woman, astute once she has become criminal, knows how to await the favourable moment to destroy by one stroke of daring the last sentiments of justice and honour that still remain in the heart of her captive.

The adulterous princess, therefore, worded the reply to be given to the tetrarch. Salome returned in triumph to the banquet-hall and, with a smile upon her lips, she asked of the tetrarch neither a necklace of pearls nor a crown of gold, but the head of John the Baptist, all bloody, in one of the banquet-dishes. It was a frightful blow and well calculated to recall to his senses the half-intoxicated man who had provoked and who now received it. Herod at once became sad and troubled. But, alas! his word had been pledged with an oath. At the same time, the courtiers—women like Herodias always have such at their service—seized the opportunity to overcome the final hesi-

tation of the royal conscience. They pleaded, no doubt, that there was greater danger in letting John live in his prison than in putting him to death. The populace were growing troublesome on the subject of the captive. John was the ally of Aretas, inasmuch as he pleaded the cause of his repudiated daughter. Aretas had declared war, and a word from John the Baptist might provoke a most disastrous revolution. Reasons never fail policy when it wishes to abet a crime. Overcome by these arguments and not daring to prove false to his sworn word, Herod made a sign to the guard who was near by, and the latter departed to strike down the victim.

The victim was not far away.[5] In fact, the executioner soon returned, bringing to Salome the ghastly gift so much desired, and the girl went off in triumph to present it to her mother. Human cruelty is capable of inconceivable excesses. Marius had held in his hands the head of Mark Antony, the orator, and, in the midst of a banquet, had most ironically apostrophised it.[6] Fulvia had taken that of Cicero upon her knees, to pierce his tongue with needles. We know not what the incestuous Herodias might have said or done before the bloody dish in which she beheld the face of her pitiless adversary. As for Herod, he did not soon forget that mouth eloquent even to the point of death, and the memory of his victim pursued him henceforward like an unrelenting torment. Thus is explained

[5] The expressions employed by both Evangelists prove this sufficiently. The young girl asks that the head be brought "forthwith" (ἐξαυτῆς) (*St. Mark* vi, 27), or, "here" (ὧδε) (*St. Matt.* xiv, 8), that is, on the instant, and the soldier brought it in one of the dishes used at the banquet (ἐπὶ πίνακι). We cannot suppose, therefore, that Herod was in Tiberias and John in the fortress of Machærus. It would have taken more than two days for the executioner to make the journey. It is probable that at that time the tetrarch was holding his court at Machærus, whence he could with ease direct the war against the King of Arabia.

[6] *Valerius Maximus*, ix, 2.

the terrified cry which the Evangelists put upon his lips: "This is John the Baptist."

This news reached the Saviour while multitudes surrounded Him on the shores of the lake. The popular emotion was great when the Baptist's disciples, who had just fulfilled their last duty to their master, were heard relating his tragic end. A general revolt was possible. If Herod attempted to have Jesus brought before him, such a revolt was almost certain. At any price, this must be avoided.

CHAPTER II

JESUS MULTIPLIES BREAD AND WALKS UPON THE WATER

His Motives for Escaping from the Enthusiastic Multitudes—Journey to the Desert of Bethsaida —The Multitudes Preceded Jesus — How Shall Five Thousand Men Be Nourished with Five Loaves of Bread and Two Small Fishes?—Creative Power of the Divine Benediction—The Passover in the Desert—The People Show Their Political Intentions—Jesus Has the Apostles Embark in Order to Withdraw Them from the Influence of the Multitude—He Comes to Them Walking on the Water —Peter Is Associated with Him in the Miracle— They Approach Genesareth. (St. Luke ix, 10–17; St. Mark vi, 30–56; St. Matthew xiv, 13–36; St. John vi, 1–21.[1])

In the meantime the Apostles had returned from their mission. The Master had, no doubt, fixed the time it

[1] For the first time the Synoptics and St. John give the same account. The latter brings Jesus hurriedly from Jerusalem, where He was assisting at some feast, to the shores of Lake Tiberias that we may witness the crisis of belief in Galilee, as we have heretofore seen it in Judea. It is by refusing to be the political Messiah dreamed of by the Jews, that Jesus alienated this people. The Synoptics agree with St. John on this important point. No doubt the independence of each account is evident if we consider the many apparent divergences to be found in them; but, in reality, the final result and the salient points are maintained by all four narrators, thus:

should last and the place where they should rejoin Him. This place of reunion is known to us only in a general way; it was on the shores of the lake that the Apostolic group came together once more. A word in St. John [2] would indicate that it was near Tiberias, recently built.

The Apostles rendered an account of what they had done and taught during their journeyings, but the terms used by the Evangelist justify the belief that it was without enthusiasm. The news of the tragic end of the Baptist had doubtless thrown a cloud upon their early missionary joy. They came back downcast. The ebb and flow of the multitudes about Jesus, with all these seekers after miracles who, coming once again to obtain the cure of their sick, left to those who were well not even the time to eat, made a most trying situation. For the soul as well as the body of an Apostle is not seldom in need of acquiring new strength in quiet and in solitude. Jesus said to the Apostles: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little." He thought that, in the meantime, the crowd would disperse, and that with it would disappear all danger of a sedition. Moreover, a lofty sense of propriety might move the Gospel labourers to honour, by a few days of silence, the memory of him who had just fallen beneath the headsman's axe, after having gloriously completed his career as Precursor and as witness.

They therefore entered the boat and, leaving the multitude on the bank, they went off toward a solitary place in the land of Bethsaida, on the other side of the sea of

the crowds that follow Jesus into the desert, the five thousand men, the five loaves and two fishes, the twelve baskets of fragments, the thanksgiving. Mark and John speak of the turf on which the people were seated and of the two hundred pennyworth of bread. John mentions by name several whom the others do not specify. He tells us what part Philip and Andrew take, and of the little boy who had the barley-loaves. We recognise an eye-witness.

[2] *St. John* vi, 23.

Galilee.[3] Whether it was that the multitudes, through some indiscretion, had learned the place whither they were going, or had followed the boat with their eyes, as it sped along the shore, they soon overtook on foot those who were hastening to escape them. St. John seems to say that

[3] Where and under what conditions are we to seek this spot? First of all, near the lake, since they reached it by boat; then, in an uninhabited locality, for Jesus wished to be far from the noise of the crowds; finally, in a restful place, at the foot of a mountain where the Master went alone to pray, and on whose side the multitudes could be seated on the grass. It is the generally accepted reading of *St. Luke* ix, 10, ὑπεχώρησεν εἰς πόλιν καλουμένην Βηθσαϊδά, which alone creates any difficulty. The *Codex Sinaiticus*, which suppresses it, and the Syriac versions, are probably the most correct. How, in fact, can we suppose that the Evangelist would direct Jesus to a town when He desired to isolate Himself with His disciples? In reality He conducted them to a desert place (ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ, v. 12), where there were only hamlets (κώμας) and fields (καὶ ἀγροὺς), and where it was impossible to find food. Of an important town like Julias-Bethsaida, there can be no question. We must then begin by not translating the ordinary text as it is written, or interpolating and transforming, as some early copyists have done: εἰς τόπον ἔρημον πόλεως καλουμένης, "toward a desert place near the town called Bethsaida." Is it not better to accept the reading of *Sinaiticus* and suppress all mention of Bethsaida? To say that St. Luke was imperfectly informed since he seemed to be unaware that the journey was made in a ship, which caused him to say nothing of the return, and of Jesus walking on the waters, seems even less reasonable than to change the text. In any case, when we suppress the word "Bethsaida," we may locate the desert spot where the crowd was miraculously fed, where we will, on the shore of the lake, which would not be that of Genesareth because it is in crossing the lake (διαπεράσαντες), that we enter into the environs of Capharnaum. Although the country was not open to Jesus, as we have seen after the healing of the demoniacs of Gergesa, the coast exactly opposite to Genesareth and to those places which belonged to the district of Julias-Bethsaida has been suggested. To this hypothesis there is a serious objection. It is that in no way can these parts be likened to a desert; and the plain which extends around the ruins of Et-Tell, El-Mes'adieh, or El-Aradj, the three sites on which Bethsaida is placed, will appear the exact opposite of a desert to those who, like ourselves, have visited it. No doubt the desert, as spoken of in the Bible, does not always mean a place devoid of vegetation, since flocks and herds were made to graze on it, but the vegetation found there is poor and wild and uncultivable by the hand of man. But there are few lands more fertile, better watered, and more thickly inhabited than the present Buttaïah. We must, in order to find thereabouts wild and solitary places, either ascend to the north-east of Et-Tell (and then we are no longer on the shore of the lake), or descend to Ouadi Semak, where, in fact, are some almost barren elevations; but these heights would be too far off to have the name of the desert of Bethsaida.

It would be more natural, perhaps, to seek the solitary spot, mentioned

Jesus had time to remain awhile alone with His Apostles,[4] and that the multitudes only arrived later. They were more numerous than ever, and the group of friends or sight-seers who had come from the western shore had grown

by the Evangelists, near the only Bethsaida they seem to have known, in the truly wild and rocky mountains to the north-east of Tell-Hum. Nothing can be more desolate than this line of hills entirely covered with black stones. Why, in truth, should Jesus, on leaving Genesareth, go far in search of a solitary place, when He could find one fifteen or twenty kilometres away and almost on the shore of the lake? Here we can understand how the multitude could follow Him on foot, although He Himself was in the boat, and how they increased in numbers in passing through the little villages along the shore. One difficulty that has been suggested by the order given to the disciples to go to Bethsaida to await Him, is really imaginary. On the contrary, nothing is more natural than that the Master should have given this order, if we keep in view His real purpose. He wished the Apostles to pretend to depart without Him, to get into the open lake, to await Him near Bethsaida, that is, at a little distance from where they then stood. This observation seems to us so reasonable, that if one should wish to look for the exact scene of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes on the eastern side of the lake, it would be logically necessary to apply to Julias what is said in *St. Mark* vi, 45, of Bethsaida. The country of Peter and Andrew would have been too far for a rendezvous. When one has a distance of forty kilometres to traverse, and wishes merely to simulate a separation for the time being, he does not put off to the thirty-fifth the moment of reunion. Besides, if one leaves Abou-Zeineh or Ouadi Semak to go to Genesareth, he is always supposed to cross the lake, not in the same direction, but at an almost equal distance; and here again the text offers no difficulty. As a matter of fact we cannot argue this matter to any advantage, unless we have actually visited the places in question.

According to our view of the matter, Bethsaida Julias has no connection with this account of the Evangelists unless the multiplication of loaves took place near Ouadi Semak, which is improbable because the place is too far from the two Bethsaidas, whereas if this were the case we would have to admit that the neighbourhood of Julias was the meeting-place appointed by Jesus. But if, as we think, this multiplication took place to the north-east of Tell-Hum, the ancient and real Bethsaida, the crowd must have been gathered at the foot of the hills which descend toward Abou-Zeineh, and the Apostles received the order to put out into the deep as though they were departing, whereas in reality they were to await the Master five kilometres away near Bethsaida. This explanation would also fit in with the puzzling text of St. Luke, for Jesus would really have gone toward Bethsaida in order to avoid the crowds, and would have been overtaken by them on the neighbouring mountains.

[4] He represents the Master seated on the mountain (ἐκάθητο) when the crowds arrived. In this case, we must understand the word ἐξελθὼν in the Synoptics as indicating not Jesus' leaving the boat, but His coming forth from His retreat and approaching the people.

wonderfully on the way. They were preparing in many places to start for the Paschal festivities, and it was enough to make known, in the towns and villages through which they passed, their project of proclaiming Jesus Messiah-King and their hope of forcing Him to undertake the leadership of a vast national uprising, in order to attract the pilgrims. The Galileans were of patriotic fibre and deeply religious; and it is not surprising that every one was eager to take part in the popular movement, the result of which would be the restoration of Israel.

The sight of this immense and interesting flock, thus seeking its Shepherd in the desert, excited Jesus' compassion. Instead of going to rest, He stood before the people, welcomed them kindly, and began at once to instruct them. He spoke long and particularly of the Kingdom of God as it ought to be understood, and then healed the sick that were brought before Him. The hours went rapidly by under the charm of His consoling and beloved words. It was near the close of day. The Apostles, coming to Our Lord, said: "This is a desert place and the hour is now passed. Send away the multitudes, that going into the towns they may buy themselves victuals." But Jesus replied: "They have no need to go; give you them to eat." Then in a tone of loving irony that revealed their familiar relations with the Master, the Apostles responded: "Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence,[5] and we will give them to eat." This was probably more than their treasury contained. Jesus smiled at their anxiety. He knew a way of feeding this multitude at less expense. In order to make more manifest the great miracle He was about to accomplish, or, perhaps, to test the charity of

[5] The Roman denarius was worth about seventeen cents. Hence here it was a question of expending thirty-four dollars; and this was exorbitant considering the resources which the Apostles had at hand.

His disciples who found it difficult to part with their last resources, He again spoke to one of them, Philip, as if appealing to the practical mind and to the experience of an Apostle who, since he was of Bethsaida, ought to know the country: "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Philip repeated the response of his colleagues, and, like a man who understood the matter in hand, he declared that, even though they were to take the two hundred penny-worth of bread proposed, there would not yet be food enough to enable each one to have a moderate share. Finally Jesus says: "How many loaves have you? Go and see." By ascertaining that no one had anything with him, He employed the best means of proving afterward that He alone had provided nourishment for all present.

In their journey around the lake the crowds had but one thought, that of rejoining Jesus. The impatience of the soul makes one forget the needs of the body. Among all these people were found only five loaves of barley and two fishes.[6] A boy was carrying them. The ready information that Andrew, the usual companion of Philip, gives to this effect shows that they had already been considering the matter. But what were these for so many? Still, Jesus had them brought to Him. Then He bade them to divide the multitude into groups of fifty or of a hundred persons, and these groups, drawn out in equal lines along the hillside, seated themselves on the carpet of green that spring had provided. The grass, indeed, was already high, as it was near the time of the Paschal feast.

This chronological observation, which St. John inserts

[6] The lower classes for the most part ate barley bread. (*II Kings* vi, 19, xvi, 1; etc.) The fishes mentioned here were baked or salted. St. John calls them ὀψάρια in the language of the fishermen, who made salt fish their ordinary food.

in his narrative quite casually, as it were, throws a special light upon the great miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. At the very time when the Pharisees and the hierarchical party were making a display in Jerusalem of their vain and hypocritical piety in His Father's house, He was in hiding in the desert place, not daring to enter the Holy City, through fear of arousing prematurely the implacable hatred of His enemies. The crowd that has followed Him suffers from hunger, while all Israel is eating of the Paschal Lamb under the eyes of the Levitical priesthood. His heart is moved at the thought, and His sovereign power determines to inaugurate the feasts of the new religion, preluding thus the institution of the great Passover, which is to be the joy of the future. The order He provides for in this vast and picturesque banquet discloses to us His intention of inviting this multitude to a kind of religious repast.

Standing over the assembly, like a father in the midst of his family during the Paschal festival, He took the loaves, blessed them, and raised His eyes to heaven, giving thanks to God.[7] This was the solemn moment in which the miracle was being accomplished. Suddenly the blessing effected in His hands what it effects by slow and successive development in the bosom of the earth, when the harvest grows, with this difference that now it brings forth not the wheat, but the bread itself which is but a later transformation of the wheat. The one was no more difficult than the other to the Master of nature. He Who creates matter in all its various forms can, when He desires, create it directly in its final form. Jesus began

[7] St. John uses the word *εὐχαριστήσας* perhaps as if to say that here was a presage of the future eucharistic consecration. Probably St. Luke had the same thought in saying that Jesus blessed the loaves (*εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς*). (Comp. *I Cor.* x, 16.) This attitude of Jesus had profoundly impressed the multitude, and the four Evangelists purposely make note of it.

to break the loaves and to apportion the fishes. His generous hand, unwearied, gave out the shares which, indefinitely renewed, passed from the Apostles to the multitude, until all had eaten and were satisfied. Now they numbered five thousand men, not counting the women or the children who, following the Oriental custom, had to remain apart to take their repast.

When they had finished, Our Lord bade them gather up what was left. It was becoming that what God had just given them by a miracle should not be left to perish. Twelve baskets full of bread[8] and many fragments of fish proved that the multitude had found there in the desert a superabundant meal, without having recourse to Philip's two hundred pence. There could be no doubt that He Who had thus royally entertained them was more than man, and they cried out: "This is, of a truth, the prophet that is to come into the world." Who, then, was more worthy than He to govern the people for whom He was so well able to provide subsistence? They were seized with the thought of proclaiming Him king by main force[9] even, and to proceed, perhaps, to have Him crowned in Jerusalem. It is certain that He Who by opening His hand could so easily let fall rations for His troops, was well able to raise a numerous army and to march on to the surest triumph. Why delay longer the realisation of the national hopes? With singular self-conceit, these good people, forgetting the true character of the Messiah-King and the thoroughly spiritual conditions of His Kingdom, were desirous of a culmination. Jesus knew their

[8] These were probably the twelve travelling-baskets of the Apostles. A Jew never journeyed without the basket in which he kept his eatables; hence Juvenal's line: "Quorum cophinus fœnumque supellex" (*Sat.*, iii, 15), and the epithet *cistiferos* applied by Martial to the sons of Israel (*Epig.*, v, 17).

[9] The verb ἁρπάζειν sufficiently indicates this.

thoughts, and, unable to dispel their illusions, He fled to the mountain for recollection and for prayer.

The night was passed, as well as a portion of the next day, in this semi-political deliberation.[10] The popular excitement was not calmed. There was even a danger of gaining over the Apostles. For they were only too ready to look for the inauguration of an earthly kingdom, and for a long time to come we shall see them dreaming of a warlike Messiah, enforcing His rule with violence, and, on the day following His victory, distributing to His favourites the first dignities of His empire. This was the first time they had beheld a multitude of five thousand enthusiastic and excited men around the Master. They had only to procure His assent, and He was proclaimed King of Israel. Their ambitious aspirations could desire no better opportunity for success. Hence they readily shared, if they did not also foment,[11] the illusions and the extravagant boldness of the multitude. Delaying not another day, Jesus determined to remove them and to remain alone with the multitudes. He intended to dismiss them also, but only after He had made them listen to reason.

Employing His authority,[12] therefore, He obliged the Apostles to enter their boat and to push out upon the deep, as if they were departing for good. In reality, they had received instructions to take their stand near by and to await Him in sight of Bethsaida.[13] Obedience on this

[10] In *St. Matt.* xiv, 15 and 23, two evenings are clearly marked out.

[11] *St. John* vi, 70, 71, seems to indicate at least the connivance of Judas. Comp. also v. 66.

[12] The Evangelists clearly say so; ἠνάγκασεν . . . ἐμβῆναι.

[13] As we have before observed, wherever we locate the scene of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, we must understand that Jesus arranged to meet His Apostles a short distance away. It was not in order that He might Himself make the journey on foot to Capharnaum that He sent them away, but to separate them from the crowds, who, with their ideas of an earthly Messiah, were gaining an influence over them. At the same time He leaves the multitude under the impression that He is not going to depart. Bethsaida

occasion must have been painful to them. Once alone, Jesus sought no doubt to persuade the people that they must seek shelter for the night. They, yielding to His paternal advice and thinking to find Him again the next day, consented to withdraw. The sun had disappeared below the horizon, and the weather was unfavourable.

But while they supposed that the Master was at prayer, and were respecting His solitude, He was hastening toward Bethsaida,[14] to rejoin His disciples, as He had promised. The latter, though they had long since reached the point fixed as the place of reunion, were making vain efforts to land. The gale of the tempest that was violently raging drove them back again and again to the middle of the lake. A part of the night was passed in this useless labour. They were retreating instead of advancing. Already the third watch had passed.[15] Jesus, if He had continued on His way, must have arrived at Capharnaum.[16] This thought, as well as the danger there was in struggling against the north-east winds, made the Apostles

is certainly near at hand, and thus Jesus names it as a rendezvous. It is incredible that, wishing to go from the south of Buttaïah to Capharnaum, He should say to them: "Go and wait for me at five kilometres from Capharnaum. I will walk thirty-five during the night, and cross the ford over the Jordan, to rejoin you." This is against all reason, and by Bethsaida we must understand the nearest port, whither Jesus betook Himself at nightfall, and where He rejoined His disciples. We may note that John does not mention this meeting appointed by Jesus, but he supposes it, as otherwise we could not explain why the disciples had departed without their Master, much less why they expected Him to rejoin them (verse 7).

[14] We must not lose sight of the fact that the various places on the shores of the lake are not at a great distance from each other. It was not therefore to avoid the fatigue of going on foot that Jesus wished to rejoin those in the boat, but to be at peace far from the multitude and to be with His chosen ones.

[15] At this epoch, the Jews, like the Romans and the Greeks, divided the night into four watches. The length of each, which should have been three hours, became longer or shorter, according to the season of the year. *St. Mark* xiii, 35, clearly distinguishes these four parts of the night: ὀψέ, μεσονύκτιον, ἀλεκτοροφωνίας πρωΐ.

[16] If our hypothesis as to the place of the miracle be well founded, He had only to descend by the western side of the mountain to reach Bethsaida.

decide to set sail at once for the final destination of their journey. Any halt on the way seemed as impossible as it was unnecessary. In the midst of the terrible squall, they were particularly eager to land at any point. At three o'clock in the morning they had covered a distance of only twenty-five or thirty furlongs from the shore.

Jesus knew their distress and had pity on them. As all things were easy to the Lord of the elements, He advanced straight to them who, notwithstanding their goodwill, had been unable to come to Him. What Job had said of God, He fulfilled, and, stepping from the solid ground upon the liquid plain, He walked upon the waves as upon a floor.[17] Reaching the boat, He went ahead of it in the attitude of one who would mark out its way to Capharnaum.[18] When, in the middle of the night, between the waves as they hurled themselves upon one another, the Apostles perceived a human outline upright upon the water, they uttered cries of terror, believing they were in the presence of a phantom. Jesus came nearer, that He might be known. Their fright only increased the more. Then, in order completely to reassure them, He said: "It is I; be not afraid." At the sound of the well-known voice, the Apostles took courage at once, and multiplied their efforts to reach Him as He seemed to flee before them.[19] They were eager to take Him into the boat. But He kept on ahead. Surprised at this strange sight, they were in doubt what to think of it.

Then, Peter expressing the thought of all, cried out: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the

[17] *Job* ix, 8.

[18] This is the most natural meaning of the words of St. Mark: ἤθελεν παρελθεῖν.

[19] Such seems to us to be the sense of St. John's expression: ἤθελον λαβεῖν, κ. τ. λ., which otherwise would create a serious difficulty for the narration of the Synoptics.

waters." He doubted not Jesus' sovereign power, but the reality of His presence. "Come," said the Master to him. And Peter, flattered by being associated in the miracle that sustained Jesus upon the water, leaps from the boat and walks upon the waves. The wind was violent. The Apostle, overcome, thinks he has lost his balance. He begins to be afraid, he hesitates, and gradually sinks in the water. When faith is shaken, the miracle is checked. Peter can walk no farther; he sets out to swim. In the meantime, ahead of him, Our Lord stands straight and firm in the midst of the tempest, as if to prove that faith can withstand the elements. Peter calls to Him with gesture and voice: "Lord, save me!" Then Jesus, stretching forth His hand, grasps him and lifts him up, saying: "O, thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" And together they went into the boat, which had now come up to them. Then the waves were calmed, the winds were stilled, and it was found they had reached the shore where they were to land. Assuredly greater than that of any earthly king was the power of Him Who thus commanded nature herself.

On the disciples' souls this miracle made even a livelier impression than that of the multiplying of the loaves. All who were in the boat fell on their knees before the Master. Their faces pressed to the ground, they exclaimed: "Indeed Thou art the Son of God!"

They had disembarked, not at Capharnaum, but in its neighbourhood. This is what the Evangelists mean by naming the land of Genesareth. There again the inhabitants asked for and obtained many miracles. The Saviour, with inexhaustible kindness, healed all their sick and gave consolation to the afflicted.

CHAPTER III

DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE

The Partisans of a Political Messiah Rejoin Jesus at Capharnaum — Jesus Rejects Their Earthly Views—How He Understands His Royalty—He Is the Bread of Life for Those Whom the Father Brings to Him—He Desires that Man Shall Receive Not Only His Doctrine, but Also His Flesh and His Blood, Which Are to Be Offered for the Life of the World—The Meaning of the Offering—Perfect Communion—Dissension Among the Adherents of Jesus—Peter's Response—Hypocritical Silence of Judas. (St. John vi, 22–71.)

In the meantime the party of zealots, who were eager for the proclamation of the Messianic Kingdom, had reappeared on the following day in the desert of Bethsaida, in the hope of again finding Jesus. Their disappointment was great when they learned that He had departed. Boats that had arrived from the neighbourhood of Tiberias might have brought them definite tidings, and might have assured them that He had been seen on the opposite shore. It may be that these boats had been sent to bring this information and to fetch back to Capharnaum the leaders in the popular agitation. It is quite possible, indeed, that these latter may have had some understanding

even within the Apostolic circle itself. Have we not seen how Jesus' disciples shared with the multitude the desire of transforming the Messiah into an earthly king? Would not the worldly and selfish soul of a Judas seek with impatience every opportunity to hasten events in order the sooner to enjoy the material results he expected therefrom? Later on, under the influence of analogous sentiments, he connives no longer with the friends, but with the very enemies of Jesus.

However that may be, the boats from Tiberias arrived most opportunely to carry to the other side those who wished to rejoin Jesus without delay, and to bring the group of revolutionists again around Him. When these enthusiasts discovered Him, in the synagogue of Capharnaum, they approached Him with unfeigned eagerness. "Rabbi," they said, "how and when camest Thou hither?" To find Him again was to recover all their worldly hopes. Jesus knew it well, and, instead of replying to their question, He rebuked the intention that dictated it: "Amen, amen, I say to you, ye seek Me, not because ye have seen miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. For Him hath God the Father sealed." The lesson was direct. These ambitious agitators with their deep-felt longings are mistaken in seeking in Jesus the Thaumaturgus Who will feed His partisans, instead of the Teacher Who seeks to instruct His disciples. To ask of the Messiah barley-bread, when He offers moral life; to wish to make Him King of the earth, when He is King of Heaven, is to mistake His august character and to suppress His true grandeur. Like fools they have regard only to the body which is to be fed, to the earthly man who is to be satisfied, and as for the loftier, the spir-

itual, the divine side of man, they have no suspicion of it. It is a woful case; for the Son of Man has not been chosen, marked, and consecrated by His Father for the vulgar mission of founding a political kingdom; He has been sent to establish the great society of souls and to lay the foundation of the spiritual city of the children of God.

But the people made answer: "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" With all their devotion to the Messianic cause they are astonished that they are not a part of the religious work that Jesus wishes to found. "This is the work of God," replies Jesus, "that ye believe in Him Whom He hath sent." God demands not partisans who will combat, but faithful hearts who will believe. Faith is the work He expects from men. In His sight they can do nothing greater or more necessary: nothing greater, since faith is the complete gift of one's self in the humiliation of the mind and in the sacrifice of the heart; nothing more necessary, since it is by faith alone, uniting our souls to Jesus Christ, that we are incorporated in the Messianic Kingdom.

In the synagogue, as in every public assembly, there were hearers of various dispositions. Besides those who had witnessed the multiplication of the loaves, and who were eager to learn of Jesus His real intentions, there were jealous Pharisees, incredulous teachers, who became indignant when they heard the youthful Prophet put Himself forward resolutely as the object of the faith of mankind. "What sign, therefore, dost Thou show," they said to Him sharply, "that we may see and may believe in Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, *He gave them bread from heaven to eat*." [1] This was a malicious effort to turn to their own profit the blame that Jesus had laid upon the people, and

[1] *Ps.* lxxvii, 24, 25; *Exod.* xvi, 4 and 15.

His refusal to continue to nourish them by a miracle. If He is the Messiah, let Him prove it by doing each day in the sight of all, that which He had already once done, in the desert. Moses acknowledged himself inferior to the Messiah, and yet he had nourished, not five thousand people on a single occasion, but the entire people during forty years, and that, too, not with barley-bread, but with bread from heaven. Jesus, taking up the comparison they have made, says to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you; Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world." Thus let there be no equivocation; the bread of which Jesus speaks is not that of which His questioners speak. They refer to a miraculous but material manna; He, in these ambiguous words, means to convey that He Himself is a spiritual bread that is come down from heaven, and that it is through Him and by Him that the world is to live.

If Jesus is not really God, nothing can be more astounding, more unheard of, more inexplicable than this assertion and the whole discourse that follows. For, after all, where could He have derived so certain and so perfect a knowledge of His future part in the history of mankind? It cannot be denied, in truth, that for nineteen centuries the world has asked life from Him, and that by Him as by an inexhaustible and ever-refreshing store of bread the world has been visibly nourished, through the assimilation of His thoughts, His morality, and His virtues.

His beautiful response is too sublime for even the most favourably disposed portion of His audience to comprehend. All that these ignorant Jews understand is that He is talking of a miraculous bread which is as material, however, as the bread of the desert. With a simplicity that

recalls that of the woman of Samaria, they declare that they are ready to be satisfied with it, and to follow Him Who will give it, wherever He may lead. "Lord," they say, "give us always this bread." At this point Jesus, resolutely removing the veil with which He had cloaked His thought, puts an end to all misunderstanding at the risk of breaking with His most devoted followers: "*I am the bread of life!*" He exclaims; "he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." They need look no farther; the food which at the same time is and gives real life is Himself come down from heaven, He Who being alive in God from all eternity, is come upon earth and is become incarnate in order to be the life of man. Man, therefore, has only to take, by an act of faith, and assimilate this divine food from heaven, and he will no longer feel either hunger or thirst in his soul. Unfortunately, though invited to this incredible communion, he hesitates to eat what would give him life. This thought saddens Jesus. "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me, and ye believe not." This is a formal condemnation of a great number of His hearers. They have seen His works, have heard His discourses, yet they have not made the act of faith which would have brought them life.

Will all mankind follow their example? Assuredly not; this would be contrary to God's plan. Jesus, Who seems to have been for a moment in silent thought, casts a sudden glance into the future, and His heart is reassured. "All that My Father giveth Me," He says, "shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out; because I am come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of the Father Who sent Me, that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of My Father that sent Me:

that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day." Inevitably men shall rise up who will desire to assimilate the divine life placed at their disposal. But, come they whence they may, even from among the vilest of the Gentiles, they shall be welcomed. The bread of heaven shall be given them. Not one of those whom the Father has chosen shall die of hunger; in the ardour of their faith they shall all live by that Jesus Whom they shall have contemplated, adored, and served with their most generous love. Thus it is that on the last day the multitude of the elect shall rise up full of life and beauty. Then the Son shall place in His Father's hands the flock that He shall have faithfully guarded, fed, and sanctified.

These assertions touched the Jews on their most sensitive side. It was hard to learn that pagans might be preferred before themselves. Was He Who spoke thus the true Messiah of Israel? This fresh grievance aggravated the already strange pretension to be the bread of life come down from heaven, and a long-continued murmuring began to be heard in the assembly. "Is not this Jesus," they said, "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith He: I came down from heaven?" The Master makes no reply to this objection which prudence forbids Him to answer directly. To disclose the mystery of His divine conception would only have intensified the scandal in the eyes of His questioners. But with that severe authority which His words at times assumed, He said to them: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him,[2] and I will raise him up in the last day. It is

[2] The verb ἕλκυειν, which Jesus uses, does not imply the violent action of dragging a man against his will. It signifies an impulse given to one who was at first unwilling, but who, in the end, permits himself to be led on. The very text of Isaias, which Jesus quotes, indicates simply a persuasive in-

written in the prophets: *And they shall all be taught of God.*[3] Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned, cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, but He Who is of God,[4] He hath seen the Father." The faithful are therefore first chosen by the Heavenly Father; it is He that opens their hearts, makes ready their souls, and, at times by the violent strokes of His mercy, at times by the sweetness of His grace, leads them, conquered but happy, to the Son. His all-powerful influence accomplishes its work amid the ordinary incidents of life. A great grief that hurts, or a joy that exalts, a word that we read in the Holy Books, or that we gather from the lips of a true believer, a sudden light that dispels all doubt, all these are the voice of God. Though we have not seen Him in Himself—for this is the exclusive privilege of His only Son Who is in His bosom—we feel His influence, and, moved by a secret force which does not destroy our liberty, but only guides it, we are conducted to the Son. And then He begins His work: by His doctrine, He furnishes us with the great light of religion; by His expiatory sacrifice, He restores us to righteousness; by His contact, He gives us life again. At last, comes the third agent in our moral sanctification, whom Jesus will name later on; it is the Holy Spirit. It belongs to the Spirit to care for the converted soul; to adorn it with His gifts; to make it a temple, wherein God shall be duly honoured. Thus the two Persons who proceed from the Father bring back to

fluence of God penetrating a docile nature with His grace and leading it where He will. The picture used here seems to remind one of the father of a family who accompanies his young child to the schoolmaster. The Father leads men to His Son's school; and men, like children, seem to approach their preceptor only with difficulty. That is why they are drawn, but not with violence.

[3] *Isa.* liv, 13, and *Jer.* xxxi, 33, etc.

[4] After these words of the Master, we need not ask where St. John found the idea of his prologue: ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ is the exact counterpart of ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν. The Son is *of the* Father and wholly *with the* Father.

the Father those whom the Father had chosen, the one by enlightening and redeeming them, the other by completing their sanctification. Such is the invariable and sublime history of God, Who employs His power, His truth, and His love for His own glory in the exercise of His mercy.

"Amen, amen, I say unto you," continues Jesus, with ever-increasing energy, "He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life! Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." These last words are plainly a transition to a new order of ideas. Besides the bread which the Father has given to earth, there is the flesh which the Son gives for our resurrection. As bread, Jesus offers to humanity truth that nourishes the soul. As flesh and blood, He creates in us supernatural life; for it is by His sacrifice that He has accomplished our redemption. Hence man, to live a complete life, must be incorporated at the same time with Jesus the Teacher and with Jesus the Redeemer. The first act is accomplished by faith which unites us with His thought; the second, by physical contact which should join us to His body bruised and immolated for our salvation. To grasp Christ in His whole divine being, moral and physical—that is for us the condition of the religious life. The greater the energy with which man attaches himself to this bread, this flesh, this blood, that are to nourish and to sanctify him, the greater will be the intensity of his life. He must bring God into his own life, and, his life being absorbed in the divine life, there must be henceforth in his enlightened

soul, in his transformed heart, in his sanctified flesh, but one living being, Jesus Christ.

These theories were far beyond the capacity of an audience which, taking them literally and with no thought of discovering their purport, exclaimed more violently than a moment before: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Their lack of intelligence cannot discourage Jesus. On the contrary, He insists on giving His words a sense that is more and more literal. "Amen, amen, I say to you: Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Here, without further metaphor, the precept is imposed in all its astonishing reality. That the union may be perfect and life assured, it is not enough that Jesus be eaten in spirit; the mouth itself must receive Him; a real eating of the victim offered for the human race becomes necessary.[5] But is it human flesh that must be eaten; is it blood, yet warm, that must be drunk? The institution of the Eucharist will furnish the divine response to that question. After the Last Supper, the Saviour's flesh will be really, not the bloody, but the mystical food of mankind, and His blood, not the repellent, but the consoling drink that is offered to Christians under the veil of the Sacrament. And now the last word in the divine plan tells us the marvellous results of the strange and heavenly repast to which Jesus invites us. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same

[5] Jesus employs the most expressive terms to signify a physical assimilation: *τρώγων*, eating with the teeth; *πίνων*, drinking as a beverage; and He makes it certain that this is not a metaphor but a reality: *ἀληθῶς βρῶσις, ἀληθῶς πόσις.*

also shall live by Me." True life has its source in God alone, Who is the Living Father, according to Jesus' expression. This life attains its bloom in His Word, and, in a visible manner for us, in the Man-God. To eat the Man-God is to bring within ourselves that which is in the Man-God Himself, and consequently the life of the Father; it is to unite ourselves to the Infinite, since we establish between ourselves and Jesus the same relation that exists between Jesus and His Father. Only, the Son derives His life directly from that of the Father, and, reproducing it on earth under a human form, He places it within our reach. As earthly bread gives a share in the life of nature, the bread of heaven gives us a share in the life of God. It is called *living* bread because it bears the *Living One*, and communicates Him to all who, by faith, desire to possess Him. To be sure we absorb God less than God absorbs us; but we are nevertheless the drop of water which, falling into the sea, shares in its lofty risings, in the majesty of its calm, in the purity of its azure mass. Does communion, then, really place the life divine in us? Yes, for it is Jesus Himself that says so, and it is easy to understand that the divine element entering into our souls through our bodies, engenders, sustains, and perfects therein the very principle of our supernatural life.

The conclusion of this sublime discourse is an invitation to unite ourselves to Jesus, at present by faith, later on by the Eucharist, for there is no doubt that, mindful of His approaching death, appointing it even for the next Passover as the reality of the symbolic immolation of the lamb, He referred to the institution that was to perpetuate its memory. "This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever." His hearers were more and more amazed at His words.

They had begun by murmuring and disputing; they ended by giving expression to their indignant feelings, to which, indeed, even some of the disciples were not strangers. "This saying is hard," they exclaimed, "and who can bear it?" No doubt, those who saw no possible realisation for the Master's words other than in a revolting and cannibalistic sense, had some reason for being repelled by this proposition. But they were wrong in attributing to Jesus such extravagant designs. His words must have had a more spiritual meaning, and it was for His hearers to discover it. Far from retracting them, the Master endeavoured to maintain them in their literal and direct sense, merely hinting that there was a misunderstanding as to the manner of eating, which was to be in no way bloody. "Doth this scandalise you?" He said. "If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" [6] They will then at least understand that there could be no question of eating flesh that is given out in portions like the flesh of a mortal victim. He who ascends to heaven after his resurrection cannot die again. This, therefore, is what will take place: Jesus will give Himself really, but under a mystical form; substantially, but under the sacramental species that will recall His death; wholly, His humanity and His divinity together; Himself entire, in a word, but multiplied, not divided. Then He shall appear as the *Bread from Heaven*, since, having come down from heaven, He will ascend again, and though eaten as a Victim here below, on high He will nevertheless ever be King, living and full of glory. Then shall men grasp at every reason to apply to themselves the doctrine and the supreme expiation of Him Who will have sealed His work with the prodigy of His Ascension.

[6] This allusion to the Ascension is the more remarkable since St. John says nothing later on of the Ascension itself.

Henceforth, if one wishes to comprehend that which seems to be incomprehensible, he must be penetrated by the words which the Master adds, and which dispel many difficulties. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," He says; "the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Let not the senses therefore endeavour to find the flesh of Jesus Christ; they will not discover it; it is a mystical flesh; it is for the spirit alone to find it, to feel it, to adore it while eating it. From the natural point of view, the Eucharist would be impossible. From the supernatural point of view, it is life in all that is sublime and ideal. He comprehends it who can silence his body, and can give ear to his soul alone, in the light of faith and in the ecstasy of love.

Therefore, whatever doubts His hearers might have as to the character of the Messianic Kingdom, let them now be put aside. Its atmosphere is the purest spirituality. All earthly views, all human means, all coarse appetites are excluded from it. The King, as Jesus has just said, gives Himself to be the food of His subjects' souls, and, by this giving, creates the close ties that bind His people to Him. In the supernatural gifts He offers and the religious homage He expects, material desires have no part. Nearly all the relations of the Master to His subjects are established in the higher, invisible world of spirits. Like swift-winged eagles, the faithful ever rise up to reach for the heavenly bread, to grasp it, and to eat it. For them it is a duty and a pleasure. The bread that is given is the King Himself, and all together, forming but one people, one family, the organism of one body, as it were, according to St. Paul's beautiful expression, they constitute the most holy, the most worthy, the most divine homage that earth can offer to heaven.

But, in all this, there was no trace of what had been

the dream of those ambitious disciples who, a few days before, had hastened to the Master's side. If by this explicit profession of faith, Jesus had wished to end all misunderstanding, His success was complete. He perceived it, for, says the Evangelist, He read in their hearts, and distinguished "those that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him." Therefore, with an accent of profound sadness, He added: "There are some of you that believe not. . . . Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father." It was a touching farewell addressed to all those who looked for a temporal Messiah.

Deceived in their hopes, the politicians noisily withdrew. Their business was not with a spiritual Messiah, and they departed.

Unfortunately this voluntary separation, which purged the Kingdom of God of a most dangerous leaven, did not extend to the Apostolic circle itself, where the criminal element was still represented. As if to force them to declare themselves explicitly, Jesus turns to the Twelve,[7] and says, "Will ye also go away?" Peter with his customary ardour made himself the voice of all and answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Holy One of God." No one protested against this act of faith, the terms of which seemed to make it collective. Yet there was one who could not give his adherence to it; this was Judas. In a tone of sadness fully capable of penetrating and converting a soul less hypocritical, Jesus

[7] St. John suddenly speaks of the Twelve as if they had already been mentioned. In his *Gospel* he has spoken of the vocation of only five disciples and of the existence of an indeterminate but large group of faithful. So we see here another instance of his agreement with the Synoptics, *St. Luke* vi, 12 *et seq.*; *St. Mark* iii, 13 *et seq.* Telling that Jesus has chosen the Twelve, he says: ἐξελεξάμην, while *St. Luke* vi, 13, says: ἐκλεξάμενος.

said: "Have not I chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil." This awful utterance passed unheeded the heart of the wretched man, who declined to escape by the door thus opened to him. He assumed an impassive expression, and counted on the Master's kindness not to betray him. The truly wicked have confidence enough in the virtue of the good to repay them for their inexhaustible patience.

From now on the position of Jesus in Galilee becomes difficult. Several of His disciples having given the example of defection, the people will manifest less enthusiasm and interest in Him. His enemies will profit by it to pursue Him more boldly, and, even in Galilee, where the harvest seemed to advance so rich in promise, the word of God threatens to remain fruitless. The word that gave the quietus to wretched human hopes was enough to compromise everything: "The Messiah is not the King of men, but the King of souls."

CHAPTER IV

THE PHARISEES AGAIN ASSUME THE OFFENSIVE

Renewed Enthusiasm—The Ears of Corn Gathered and Eaten on the Sabbath—Jesus' Twofold Response—The Sabbath Is for Man, Not Man for the Sabbath—Eating with Unwashed Hands—A Counter-Question in Reply—Jesus' Sublime Morality: Only That Which Comes from the Heart Defiles a Man—The Anger of the Pharisees—Jesus' Appreciation — His Explanations to the Disciples—The Man with the Withered Hand—Jesus Questions His Adversaries — They Refuse to Answer — Their Resolution to Join with the Herodians and to Put Jesus to Death. (St. Luke vi, 1–11; St. Mark ii, 23–28; vii, 1–23; iii, 1–6; St. Matthew xii, 1–8; xv, 1–20; xii, 9–14.[1])

When they saw that the Saviour's popularity was now on the wane, the Pharisees concluded that they could again assume the offensive, with some chance of success. They were returning from the celebration of the Paschal feast

[1] We have placed here the incident of the ears of corn cut on the second-first Sabbath, because chronologically we are not far from the date on which it must have occurred. The corn was ripe, and the particular Sabbath indicated by St. Luke was at this epoch. The cure of the man with the withered hand took place a short time afterward. The violent resolution which the Pharisees take and their alliance with the Herodians are here in their proper place.

in Jerusalem, where they had again drunk in at its very source the most ardent zeal and the most extreme formalism. To surprise the disciples of Jesus in formal opposition to the prescriptions of the Rabbis was not difficult. The Master, by His example and by His counsel, had authorised them resolutely to suppress all those ridiculous observances which, like vile excrescences, disfigured the ancient tree of the Mosaic law. They did not hesitate to do so. Hence the Pharisees were filled with increasing anger and indignantly protested.

One Sabbath-day,[2] for instance, they had been seen violating the law of rest, and the scandal they gave was great. The circumstances were as follows:

In company with the Master, they were passing by a field of ripened grain. They were fasting. Except in case of sickness, a faithful Israelite took nothing on the Sabbath-day before offering up his early devotions[3] in the synagogue. Oppressed with hunger, the disciples began to gather some ears of corn[4] which they ground between their hands in order to eat them.[5] Certain Phar-

[2] St. Luke names this day the *second-first* Sabbath. The question is, what does this word signify, and explanations are as numerous as they are uncertain. Some say that the second-first Sabbath was the *first* Sabbath of the *second* month of the year; others that it was the *first* of the seven Sabbaths extending from the *second* day of the Paschal week (16th of *Nisan*) to Pentecost. Others, again, understand it to be the *first* Sabbath of the *second* year of the Sabbatic cycle. Quite recently it has been thought that the Jews had two first Sabbaths, one beginning the civil year in the month of *Tisri* (September-October), and the other the ecclesiastical year in the month of *Nisan* (March-April). The latter Sabbath would be called the *second-first*, while the former would be called the *first-first*. In any case, it is a question of a date shortly after the Passover.

[3] *Berac.*, i, 4.

[4] From this account, found in all the Synoptics, it is clearly seen that Jesus had passed one spring and, consequently, one feast of the Passover in Galilee, before that on which He was put to death. The Synoptics quite unexpectedly agree in this with *St. John* vi, 4.

[5] In our journeys in Palestine we have often seen this done. Our guides, with little or no respect for the property of others, gathered the almost ripe corn and ate it.

isees saw them and became indignant, not on account of the theft, which the law authorised,[6] but because of the violation of the Sabbath. Some of them directly attacked the disciples. "Why do ye do that," they said, "which is not lawful on the Sabbath-day?" Others, in turn, addressed the Master, since it was for Him that they had the greatest hatred: "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day!" Is not this plucking and crushing of the corn tantamount to harvesting and grinding it? Is it not doing servile work? This misdemeanour was provided for in the tradition of the ancients. It was included in one of the thirty-nine cases marked out by the Rabbis on the subject of the Sabbatic repose.[7]

Jesus gave no time to the discussion either of the authority or of the reality of this prohibition. For His masterful teaching other ground and broader horizons were necessary. "Have ye never read," said He, "what David did when he had need and was hungry, himself and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God[8] under Abiathar, the High-Priest,[9] and did eat the

[6] According to *Deut.* xxiii, 25, one might, when hungry, gather ears of corn with his hands, but not with the sickle.

[7] Maimonides, *Schabba*, ch. viii.

[8] This expression refers here to the Ark of the Covenant, which was then at Nobe. (*I Kings* xxi, 1.)

[9] St. Mark mentions only Abiathar, and even this name is suppressed in some copies, the copyists being too much taken up with an apparent historical inaccuracy. In fact, it is Achimelech, father of Abiathar, who gives the loaves of proposition to David, who is fleeing from the wrath of Saul. He pays for his kindness with his life. Yet we read (*II Kings* viii, 17, and *I Paralipomenon* xviii, 16) that Abiathar was father to Achimelech. It is not impossible that the father and the son were both called by the two names of Abiathar-Achimelech. This would be nothing new in the history of the Jewish people, and in this way an apparent error which is found in the Old Testament, before occurring in St. Mark, would be easily explained. Some exegetes do away with the difficulty by translating Jesus' words as a literary reference: "Have ye never read . . . in the section of Abiathar, the High-Priest?" The account He thus referred to was the liturgical fragment that contained the history of the priest of David.

loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests?" If David's act has always seemed to be pardonable in such circumstances, it is because natural law takes precedence over all positive laws. When that law speaks, all other laws must be silent. Is it not evident that God commands man to live, first, and then to observe ceremonial rites? David, the great prophet and great king, had not hesitated a moment between the Mosaic obligation of respecting the twelve loaves placed on the golden table in the Tabernacle and the peremptory demand of nature that neither he nor those who were with him should be let die of hunger. Abiathar had approved of his action, since he himself had given him the holy bread. Were all these illustrious believers of the past less capable casuists than the modern Rabbis? How, indeed, was the evil in breaking an ear of corn on the Sabbath-day greater than in eating the loaves reserved for the priests?

Instances were abundant. According to St. Matthew, the Master cited another quite as topical as the first. "Or have ye not read," said He, "in the law that on the Sabbath-day the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame?" Their functions necessitated acts which, in themselves, are servile works. Thus on that day they immolate the two lambs of one year old claimed by the Lord; they prepare the wood of the altar and burn a portion of the victims they have killed. Why, then, notwithstanding the law of Sabbatic rest, do they think that none of these things is forbidden them? It is because they deem themselves fully dispensed by reasons of a superior order, the necessities of the Levitical ministry, just as the urgent need of food, long before, dispensed David and his followers.

"But I tell you," continued Jesus, "that there is here a greater than the temple." He meant, no doubt, the

ministry of the preaching of the Gospel. To the end that they might progress more rapidly, and more certainly glorify God by the spreading of the Good-Tidings, the Apostles might well pluck the corn and eat it, even on the Sabbath-day. Was it not more agreeable to the Lord to see them labouring at His work than to behold them rendering themselves incapable of serving Him by restricting themselves to useless observances? If the Pharisees understood that utterance of which He had once before reminded them: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," instead of incriminating the innocent, they would conclude that to preach is better than to fast or to respect the Sabbatic rest. God loves us more for an act of charity toward our neighbour than for an act of piety toward Himself. Finally, He clearly solves the difficulty by saying: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also."

For the present the controversy ended there. But before long another grave question was to spring up, which would force the Master to give the final blow to the authoritative pretensions of Pharisaic ritualism.

It was known and seen that the disciples of Jesus had no scruples in eating without having previously washed their hands. The Pharisees, on the other hand, had made the custom of these ablutions almost universal. They determined their number and manner[10] with the greatest care. Not only before and after meals, but on returning from a public place, whether the market or a popular assembly, they had to wash their hands, and, according to circumstances, to hold them, while being purified, at times down, and at other times elevated.[11] There was not an

[10] In the treatise, *Schulchan-Aruch*, twenty-six prescriptions are given concerning the morning ablution of the hands.

[11] St. Mark's expression, *ἐὰν μὴ πυγμῇ νίψωνται τὰς χεῖρας*, has been variously translated by interpreters. According to some, the Pharisees' principle

object, even among the most necessary to the uses of life, that was not subjected to regular lustrations. The cups used at table, the vases of wood and of brass, the couches on which the guests reclined, if not cleansed in accordance with the strictest rules, might become a cause of impurity. The Pharisees thought that the supposed stain communicated to these various objects by profane contact was transmitted to the body, and through the body reached even to the soul. In this way, by simple neglect, the most just and most virtuous Jew could, unawares, be covered with stain and become wholly unworthy of communion with Jehovah. "He that sitteth at table," said the moralists of the Pharisees, "without washing his hands, is as culpable as the man who gives himself to a harlot." [12]

Such being their principles, we may judge how angry they must have been at the independent attitude of the disciples who publicly transgressed these extraordinary prescriptions. They exclaimed that it was scandalous, impious, and, after having publicly reprehended them, they turned to the Master, convinced that, now at least, He would not dare to countenance so flagrant a transgression of the law. "Why," said they in a tone of importance, "do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." By thus citing tradition they thought they said all that was needed; they knew not, or feigned not to know, that this unlawful tradition, an invention wholly human imposed upon a superstitious and credulous people, came not from God,[13] but solely from the caprice and the hypocrisy of a

was to wash one hand closed in the palm of the other; in the opinion of others, they dipped their hands in the water up to the wrist. The Vulgate rightly adopts the reading πυγμῇ and translates it by *crebro, often.*

[12] See Schoettgen, *Hor. Hebr.*, in h. l.

[13] They wrongly based this pretension on these passages of *Deut.* iv, 14, and xvii, 10; and on *Levit.* xv, 11.

few men. To their questions Jesus, at first, opposes another: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God for your traditions? For God"—thus He proves His accusation—"said through Moses: Honour thy father and thy mother; and he that shall curse father or mother, dying let him die. But ye say:[14] If a man shall say to his father or his mother: Let that wherewith I might have been able to assist thee be *corban* (that is to say, *consecrated* to God), he is no longer suffered to do aught for his parents. The tradition that ye have invented maketh void, therefore, the commandment of God.[15] And many

[14] The Rheims version, from which we have ventured to depart in this passage, is rendered obscure by a too literal adherence to the Vulgate. The author, it will be observed, has adhered to the Greek text, and we have thought it wiser to follow him.—*Translator's note.*

[15] As explained in *St. Mark* vii, 11, and supposed in *St. Matt.* xv, 5, the Hebrew and Aramean word *qorbân* signifies "*gift, offering.*" This passage has been variously interpreted by exegetes. The conciseness of the text supposes that Jesus cited a saying that was familiar to the Jews and quite intelligible to every one. Documents are, at present, lacking for the elucidation of its precise meaning. Studying the words κορβᾶν (ὅ ἐστι δῶρον) ὃ ἐὰν ἐξ ἐμοῦ ὠφεληθῇς, Origen, who could more easily derive help from the ancients, had declared that he could not have understood it without the following explanation from a Jew: "It sometimes happens," says this latter, "that a creditor cleverly forces an untrustworthy debtor to pay his debt by giving it to the Temple; this is done by declaring to him that the debt is *corban*, or consecrated to God. *Corban*, quod mihi debes." Since no one could keep or take what was consecrated to the Lord, children made use of it to dispense themselves from giving anything to their parents. Other interpreters have been inspired by information found among the Rabbis concerning the oath of the *corban*. (See Lightfoot and Schoettgen on this passage.) This oath is mentioned by Josephus, who (*c. Appion.*, i, 22) says that Theophrastus is wrong in ascribing it to the Tyrians, for it belongs exclusively to the Jews. (See *Antiq.*, i, iv, §4); and the treatise *Nedarim* or *Vows*, v, 6; ix, 1 *et seq.*) According to these texts, it would have to be translated as follows: "Whoever has said to his parents: '*Corban* to me are all the services that I might render to you,' can no longer do anything for them." Philo, *De Special. Leg.*, c. i, p. 771, speaks of certain Jews who bound themselves by oath to do no good to certain persons whom they detested. In the *Mischna* we find that by the oath of the *corban*, however unjust it might be, the father definitively disinherited his children, the husband was freed from all obligation of supporting his wife, and he who was thus frustrated could exact nothing when the vow was known to him. Others translate it: "All my goods are consecrated to God, but I grant you a share of merit in my offer-

other such like things you do." "Well did Isaias prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men.[16] For leaving the commandment of God you hold the tradition of men, the washings of pots and of cups." How strange this wandering away! The divine legislation, so great, so beautiful, and so essential for the governing of our moral life, is basely sacrificed at the Rabbinical command to cleanse a dish or a kettle; such is the religion of the Pharisees! With one word, Jesus has reduced it to its lowest and most contemptible terms.

Then turning to the multitude who were more capable of understanding the truth and of profiting by it, He exclaims: "Hear Me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him. But the things which come out from a man, those are they that defile him. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." [17] Thus, in a statement full of orig-

ing." Whatever we may say as to these diverse interpretations, each one bears a Pharisaical mark which accords well with the Saviour's argument. In the first case, it is the ingratitude of the son taking shelter under a false piety toward Jehovah, and finding protection for his avarice behind the Pharisaical tradition which approved of gifts to the Temple to the injury of parents. In the second, it is an exaggerated respect for an oath even though unjust, and human formalism preferred to the most evident natural and divine law. In the third, it is hypocrisy giving merit or spiritual goods even when the body exposes its material needs and asks for sensible goods. See the explanations of these texts of the *Mischna* in Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, c. xxxi.

[16] *Isa.* xxix, 13, quoted with variants of the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

[17] Protestantism is wholly wrong in making these words of the Saviour the foundation of its attacks upon the law of abstinence enforced by the Church. Even in spite of this declaration on the Master's part, it remains true that a man can be defiled by the nourishment he takes. Yet it is not that which enters into him that defiles him, but that which comes from his heart, namely, the sentiment he experiences while he eats. If one takes food that is forbidden by proper authority, he is defiled by an act of rebellion; if it be an article of food bought at great expense, he sins against the Christian spirit; if he takes it to excess, he sins against the first elements of morality.

inality of form and very positive in its meaning, He upset the theories of a detestable formalism. To make all religion consist in the multiplication of exterior practices, as the Pharisees did, was to displace the very seat of true piety, which is in the sanctuary of the soul, and to deface its character, which is wholly spiritual. Not, indeed, that true religion has no sensible forms and exterior rites; for the soul frequently feels the need of manifesting its deepest emotions exteriorly, and even of being aroused, incited, drawn by sensible signs. Moreover, the body cannot be dispensed from its obligation of giving its worship, also, to the Creator. Still the accessory must not become the principal, and the essential must not die stifled by that which should remain the less important. In permitting the Mosaic rites to stand, until they should be replaced by others, Jesus in great measure retained all that was necessary as exterior observances in the religious life; but in rejecting the senseless ceremonies of Pharisaism, He freed true religion from those puerile superfluities that had deformed and dishonoured it. He who wishes to know if he is pure, must look not at his hands, but into his heart. It is there alone that true morality is to be found.

The Pharisees had not looked for so brave a response. The young Master, without any ado, struck at their very hearts. For Him, their observances were as nothing. All that ancient traditional scaffolding was to crumble beneath the spiritual influence of the new kingdom. Their amazement gradually turned to anger. The disciples were worried at this, and they said to Jesus: "Dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were

Without this reservation, we should be forced to admit that Jesus here condemns all the prescriptions of Moses, approves of luxury, and does not discountenance intemperance.

scandalised?" Unmoved by their anxiety, the Master replied: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." And, indeed, the teachings that are not from God, the arbitrary dogmas of the human mind, are not more durable than man himself. Of the innumerable precepts of Pharisaism there shall be soon nothing left, and the sect itself shall have lived its life. "Let them alone," added Jesus sadly; "they are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." Under their interminable explanations and their capricious innovations, as beneath an impenetrable veil, these false teachers have ended by concealing the bright light of divine revelation, and, like incapable guides, wandering about in the darkness which their malice has imprudently brought on, they lead their ignorant followers to death.

This peremptory argument relieved the anxiety of the Apostles and changed their worry into visible triumph. But they had only partially understood the apothegm which Jesus had used to confound His enemies. When, therefore, the Master had dismissed the multitude and had re-entered the house, Peter, in behalf of all, approached Him and said: "Expound to us this parable." It would have been more correct to say: "these words" or "this saying"; for Jesus had not spoken a parable. "Are ye also yet without understanding?" cried the Master. "Know ye not that everything from without entering into a man cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart, but goeth into his belly and thence takes its natural course,[18] purging all meats? But the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and those things defile a man. For from within out of the

[18] In the text there is a cruder expression, *εἰς ἀφεδρῶνα ἐκβάλλεται*, to which modern languages hardly lend themselves. The Orientals are less fastidious.

heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false testimonies, envy, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man."

The moral stain of sin, the only stain that should trouble man, is received in the soul alone, and can result only from a moral act. A physical stain may in itself be disagreeable or unbecoming, but it does not constitute a sin. From the heart only, the real centre of man, does sin come forth, and there, too, it dwells. The food that one eats, the ablutions that he practises, touch, in truth, only the body. None of these can interest the soul, except by the intervention of an authorised law. But that law so loudly proclaimed by the Pharisees was not such, and Jesus, in His charity, legitimately demolished the imaginary yoke imposed through false devotion upon a people already unable to bear the lawful yoke of the law of Moses.

But religious fanaticism can never be attacked without danger, especially when it is intensified by human interests and by criminal hypocrisy.

This excitement was the harbinger of a renewed outburst in the near future. In fact, on the following Sabbath, Jesus was to appear as usual and preach in the synagogue. The Pharisees resolved to await Him there in the hope of stirring up another controversy. The slightest thing would serve them as a pretext for an attack on this bold reformer. In the assembly was a man whose right hand was withered, that is, deprived of its vitality, by paralysis. The Gospel of the Nazarenes, in its account of this scene, has placed the following prayer upon the sick man's lips: "I was a poor mason, winning my bread by the labour of my hands; I pray Thee, Jesus, give me

back my health to withdraw me from the shame of begging my living." However authentic this detail may be, the wretched man attracted Our Lord's attention. The Pharisees wondered whether Jesus would push His daring so far as to heal the paralytic on the Sabbath-day, in the synagogue itself, at the very moment of public prayer. In reality, the cure might be postponed until the following day. No true son of the Law, in their opinion, would hesitate in following this wise determination; but Jesus of Nazareth seemed to them to be audacious enough to act otherwise.

They were not mistaken. The Master read their whole thought in their eyes, and, determining to give them the lesson they deserved, He said to the paralytic: "Arise, and stand forth in the midst." It was a theological demonstration that was to be for the benefit of all. Then He turned to His adversaries, and said: "I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life, or to destroy?" For Him, Who has all power in His hands, to omit to do good is to do wrong; not to save, when one can, is to kill. This alternative is avoided only when one is free from responsibility with regard to him who is perishing or in pain. But this is not the case with Jesus, Who has been sent with supreme power and with the duty of employing it for the good of mankind. To hesitate to do good is to become responsible for evil. Would they dare to pretend that He would be guilty of a smaller violation of the law of the Sabbath by permitting the evil to exist? He awaits the reply of His accusers. Malice causes them to hold their peace. Then turning upon them a long and indignant look, He added: "What man shall there be among you"—and this personal argument confounds them—"that hath one sheep; and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not take hold on it

and lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep?" These words, from the depths of the Master's loving heart, throw an awful light on the egoism of the Pharisees. A sheep is in danger, and because it is *their sheep*, they are dispensed from the law of the Sabbath; but a man, *their neighbour*, is suffering and there is no dispensation! Is there, then, in their souls no room but for the love of themselves, and have they no love for humanity? For Jesus, the sick man is of much more account than a sheep; he is a friend, a brother. "Stretch forth thy hand," the Master says to him, and the man, certain that He Who bade him do so, gave him at the same time the strength to do it, stretched forth his hand as he was accustomed to do before his illness, and his hand became perfectly sound.

Three defeats, each more humiliating than the other, in so short a space of time and at the very moment that seemed the most propitious for victory, "filled the Pharisees," according to St. Luke's expression, "with madness." They quitted the assembly and took counsel to see what was to be done. The thought came to them to end it all with one violent stroke; but, as they were in Herod's territory, they could not undertake so important a step unless in connivance with the tetrarch. From that time on they considered without any hesitation the plan of having a secret understanding with some of his partisans and admirers. Since the Pharisees had permitted John the Baptist to fall into Herod's hands, Herod might well give Jesus up to the power of the Pharisees.

In order to defeat these frankly murderous designs, Jesus made ready to flee. He might have withstood these dangerous plotters with a group of faithful followers; but He preferred to recommend silence about Himself and His works. St. Matthew says that thus He was to fulfil

the words of Isaias:[19] "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not extinguish, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name the Gentiles shall hope." From this moment He ceased to have His domicile at Capharnaum, in order that He might henceforth lead a wandering life like the Apostle who goes before Him, seeking souls desirous of receiving the Good-Tidings, watching the plots of His enemies, undoing their plans, and often reaching the close of a wearisome day without finding a shelter beneath which to rest His head. The evil days have begun.

[19] *Isa.* xl, 1 *et seq.* The citation follows the Hebrew very freely, together with some traces of the Septuagint. This prophecy, according to the Rabbis (see the *Chaldean Paraphrases*), was well known as being Messianic.

CHAPTER V

JESUS RETIRES TO THE BORDERS OF PHŒNICIA AND WITHIN THE REGION OF THE DECAPOLIS

Reasons for This Retreat—The Woman of Canaan—Her Admirable Faith—Her Daughter Is Cured—If Jesus Saw Tyre and Sidon, What Must His Impressions Have Been?—The Road to the Decapolis—The Cure of the Deaf-Mute—Great Concourse of People Demanding Miracles—Universal Enthusiasm — Second Multiplication of the Loaves — Jesus Leaves This Country. (St. Matthew xv, 21–38; St. Mark vii, 24–37; viii, 1–9.)

Fleeing then from the hatred of His adversaries, Jesus went off toward the north-west. He followed the road of Safet, left Giscala on the right, and, crossing the broken hills of upper Galilee, He came to the confines of Tyre and Sidon.[1] In this country, which is wholly outside of Palestine, though only two days' journey from the lake, He would escape the provocation of His enemies and the importunities of the multitude. His object was to have

[1] We made this journey ourselves in 1899, on our third trip to Palestine. This is perhaps the most picturesque portion of the Holy Land.

them forget Him for a time. This is why St. Mark observes that, on entering the houses of His entertainers, He at once told them that He wished to live there unknown.

His wish was not respected. Whether already betrayed by the Apostles' enthusiasm, or preceded by the fame of His works, it was not long before it became known that He was in the country. A woman of Syro-Phœnician origin,[2] whose daughter was tormented by a demon, seems to have been particularly well informed as to who Jesus was and of what He could do. Great grief almost always renders a woman unreserved, even with those whom she does not know. It may be that the Canaanite woman's story of her trials as a mother determined the Apostles or, better still, the devoted benefactresses of the Apostolic group, to perform an act of charitable indiscretion. It is certain, at any rate, according to the Gospel narrative, that this woman had of Jesus an idea as exact as it was complete. Though an idolatress, she hailed in Him, not only the Thaumaturgus Who expelled evil spirits, but the divine Envoy in Whom were realised the Messianic hopes of Israel.

Approaching the house where Jesus had received hospitality, she cried to Him: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David! my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil!" This heart-rending appeal of the mother, who seemed herself to feel the pains of the daughter, ap-

[2] St. Matthew, following the Bible, says that she was of Canaan. As a matter of fact the Canaanites, driven out of Palestine by the Hebrews, had, in great numbers, taken refuge on the coast of the Mediterranean. The Sidonians are more particularly called Canaanites in the Sacred Books. (*Gen.* x, 15; *Judges* i, 31.) But while St. Matthew therefore preserves this name here, St. Mark, writing for the Romans, says that the woman was of Syro-Phœnician (*Συροφοινίκισσα*) origin, and Greek (*Ἑλληνίς*) or pagan in religion. Greek was synonymous with Gentile or pagan. (*II Macc.* xi, 2, etc.) *St. Matt.* xv, 22, indicates that she came from some village of Tyre bordering on Galilee. According to the *Homil. Clem.*, ii, 19; iii, 73; iv, 1, this woman was called Justa and her daughter Berenice.

peared, however, to produce no effect on Jesus. He replied not a word, and, as she continued her supplications, the Apostles, moved by them, made themselves her advocates, and, asking Him to grant her prayer, they said: "Send her away for she crieth after us." Indeed, the motive which they put forth to sustain their request, and which might be expressed as follows: "Deliver us from her importunities," only half conceals beneath apparent indifference the strong desire they had of seeing the mother's prayer granted.

Such a sentiment among the disciples in favour of a pagan woman must be signalised as a great step beyond their ancient prejudices. The horizon was therefore broadening out for these peasants of Galilee, and Jesus was made happy by that fact.

Still, the better to try them, He merely replied, somewhat unfeelingly: "I was not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This was a repetition, as if expressing His own thought, of an observation which the Apostles must have frequently made themselves. Thus ironically He made Himself the echo of their narrow ideas in order to reject their request. They suspected that this sternness would not last, and that the Master would in the end be moved to tenderness. A true man will not resist a woman's tears when she speaks in the name of her motherhood. They, therefore, permitted the Canaanite to enter the house. There she fell at the feet of Him Whose favour she wished to gain, and adored Him, saying: "Lord, help me!" But Jesus still withheld, as if He really shared the principles of Jewish exclusiveness which He had but just condemned. "Suffer first the children to be filled," He said to her, "for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." His words were a true expression of the national prejudice; for they reproduced

in the very terms it affected: "The Israelites are the sons of God, the Gentiles are dogs." [3]

Nothing could be better calculated to discourage an ordinary soul than this harsh response; but the Canaanite had a mother's heart, a proselyte's faith, and an ingenuity of mind that never miscarries. She at once takes up the painful picture the Master had employed, and, with as much delicacy as humility, she gives it an affectionate and somewhat gracious turn. In all the places where it had been, the genius of Greece had left traces of its brilliant versatility.

"Yea, Lord," said the Phœnician, "for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." She accepts the humble part left to her, and, explaining the little that she desires, she has not a doubt she will obtain it. She aspires not to the loaf itself; the small crumbs will satisfy her; she does not pretend to seat herself among the guests; let her only pass around beneath the table and gather up what is dropped. Her response shone with faith, simplicity, and appropriateness, and she draws from us the same cry of admiration that came from the mouth of the Son of God: "O woman! great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt; go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter." It was true.

The faith of this woman of Canaan, like a will of supreme power, had just done violence to the Saviour. In fact, Jesus, amid all the events of the struggle He seemed to be undergoing, had willed that the Apostles should behold the thrilling surprises that the Gentiles held in store

[3] Josephus, *Antiq.*, vi, 9, 4. See Lightfoot and Wetstein on this passage of *St. Matt.* xv, 26, and Eisenmenger, *Endeckt. Judenth.*, i, 713. In *Midr. Till.*, fol. 6, 3, we read: "Nationes mundi assimilantur canibus"; and in *Pirke Eliezer*, c. 29: "Qui comedit cum idololatra, similis est comedenti cum cane; uterque incircumcisus est."

for them. Blossoms like these, springing suddenly beneath their feet, were a promise of a wonderful harvest in that time when the Lord's workers should turn to the cultivation of this rude but singularly fertile soil. This cure showed once again Jesus' power in accomplishing at a distance the most astonishing miracles. It has been observed that the two prodigies of this class, reported in the Gospel, are accorded to two believers from among the pagans, the centurion and the woman of Canaan, as if the Master had wished to show that thus the Gentiles would be efficaciously succoured and saved, without being honoured like the Jews with His visible and personal presence.

We have no further details concerning Our Lord's stay in these countries. And yet how interesting it would be for us to know the Saviour's thoughts of the pagan civilisation of which Tyre and Sidon were two illustrious daughters. What were the Master's words when from the heights of the mountain range of Lebanon, if not from a nearer point, He saw the walls of these two cities, even yet so wealthy and proud after their awful catastrophes, their palaces of white marble outlined against the blue sea, and the temples to which Baal and Astarte had always drawn their adorers? What did He think of those workshops, rudimentary no doubt, but prodigious for the times, in which they fashioned glass, or manufactured the purple dye, and from which the smoke rose up to an azure sky; of those numberless ships which, like a great swarm, came and went unceasingly, bearing to their metropolises the treasures of the entire world? All this was visible from the heights of Galilee. Before long among their rich cargoes would come, poor and unknown, like worthless merchandise, these disciples of the Nazarene who to-day in amazement contemplated this strange spectacle. Over

these same waves of the Mediterranean, they would soon be seen themselves bearing away to every inhabited land something more precious than silk and pearls and purple: the great light of the Gospel and the sublime secret of the world's redemption.

According to a singular tradition of the Greek Church, Jesus then embarked at Tyre or at Sidon, and went to Cyprus or even as far as Mount Athos. The Evangelists' silence as to such a voyage would be surprising, and no serious attention can be given to so ill founded a claim.[4] Less improbable perhaps is the supposition that in order to reach the Decapolis, the Saviour followed the sea-route by Ptolemaïs as far as Carmel. From there, proceeding along the southern border of Galilee, He would have come, through a country where Pharisees were rarely to be found, to Scythopolis, the only city of the Decapolis west of the Jordan. Then, passing through Pella, Gadara, and Hippos, He would have reached, according to the expression of the Evangelist,[5] the very heart of the confederation. If we reject this hypothesis, we must admit that Jesus preferred the mountain-bordered valleys of Lebanon and of Anti-Lebanon, in order to reach, through Damascus or Cæsarea-Philippi, the confines of the Decapolis. But we must not conceal, in this latter itinerary, either the difficulties of the route or the necessity of seeking for the Decapolis, properly so called, in a direction where it did not lie, nor, in fine, must we ignore the illogical manner of having the Saviour pass by Cæsarea without stopping there, when we know that He betook Himself to that place a few days later to explore its neighbourhood.

[4] It is evident from *St. Matt.* xv, 21, 22, that Jesus did not even go into the land of Tyre and Sidon, but only on the coasts or frontiers (εἰς τὰ μέρη), and that the woman of Canaan came from these lands to find Him (ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐξελθοῦσα).

[5] *St. Mark* vii, 31, "through the midst."

The cities comprised in the Decapolis—originally ten, as the name indicates, and later seventeen [6]—had established a kind of league against the depredations of the Bedouins. Each of these cities preserved its own separate municipal existence, and, from the time of the conquest of Syria by the Romans, lived under the immediate authority of Rome. The great majority of their inhabitants were pagans. It is not unlikely that Jesus spent some time among them, far removed from Herod's domination and from the influence of the Pharisees, in order to accustom His disciples to contact with paganism and to excite in their hearts the desire of advancing, later on, into the midst of the Gentiles who were to be their conquest. Some, however, have thought that He meant to evangelise only the lost sheep of Israel among the pagans; for they attributed to this same intention the journey He had made to the frontiers of Tyre, where stood the ancient cities ceded to Hiram by King Solomon.

However that may be, Jesus performed miracles there. St. Mark tells of only one; but St. Matthew gives a full and glorious summary of them all.

The first sick man for whom they sought a cure was a deaf-mute.[7] Evidently Jesus' reputation as a thaumaturgus had already spread in this country. The demoniac of Gadara might have established it, and, besides, the dis-

[6] Pliny (*Hist. Nat.*, v, 17), gives ten: Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara on the Hieromax, Hippos, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, Canatha. Ptolemy repeats nearly all these names and also seven others. (*Tab.* iv, *Asiæ.*) Josephus (*Autobiog.*, 65, 74) says that this confederation was governed by a kind of council composed of the leading citizens of each city, which, subject to the Roman Proconsul, administered the affairs of the province of Syria. (Cf. Strabo, xvi, 2.)

[7] It is true, the term used by St. Mark, μογιλάλος, signifies more especially one who stammers, or who speaks only with difficulty. But as the crowd soon afterward glorifies Jesus because He makes the dumb to speak (ἀλάλους), and as deafness and dumbness usually accompany each other, it seems natural to call this invalid a deaf-mute. He is qualified as κωφὸν μογιλάλον. He was deaf and spoke with difficulty and very poorly.

ciples did their duty as Apostles in relating to all who the Master was and what He could accomplish. It was thought that He gave health to the sick by a simple touch. This was true; but since His miracles were intended to engender or to strengthen faith in souls, He usually sought to arouse religious sentiments in the sick man before He effected a cure. In this instance, the deaf-mute could not hear His words, and so Jesus had recourse to exterior signs in order to impress him. When He had separated him from the crowd He took him aside, put His fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue with His spittle. Then, looking up to Heaven that he might know that the miracle was coming from God, He heaved a deep sigh, and cried out: "Ephpheta!" [8] that is to say: "Be thou opened!" Like all things else, unable to resist the Master's bidding, the ears of the deaf man were opened, the bonds that held his tongue were burst, and, instead of putting forth inarticulate sounds, he began to speak like other men. The admiration of the spectators and the joy of the man who was cured were great. In vain Jesus recommended silence, that He might avoid the crowding of the multitudes bringing their sick. The more He bade them be silent, the more they proclaimed His omnipotence. So that in a short time the eastern shore of the lake presented the same spectacle of enthusiasm, of popular excitement, of miracles, as the neighbourhood of Capharnaum. In vain did He retire to more mountainous and more desert-like localities; they hastened to rejoin Him. There He gave speech to the dumb, power of motion to paralytics, and sight to the blind. He cured the maimed.[9] In a word, He healed all the sick that were brought to His feet. The multitudes gave loud

[8] This is a Syriac word, like so many others quoted by the Evangelists, especially by St. Mark. It is the imperative form; *ethpael*, from *phatha*, and means "*be opened*."

[9] Κυλλούς, *St. Matt.* xv, 30.

utterance to their admiration. The real Jews were proud that a prophet of their religion should be seen accomplishing such great miracles. The pagans surrendered to this evidence, and glorified the God of Israel.

Among these miracles occurred that one by which Jesus repeated the multiplication of the loaves.[10] Here again He had pity on the multitudes who had followed Him and had eaten nothing for three days. This solicitude on the Saviour's part with regard to the material needs of the people after He had given them spiritual food, has in it something deeply moving and paternal. "If I shall send them away fasting to their homes," said Jesus, "they will faint in the way, for some of them have come from afar off." It was not possible for Him to dismiss them in such circumstances. Thus every day Divine Goodness reasons in behalf of mankind. It is because a Providence watches over them that God's servants may lay aside all anxiety for the morrow.

The Apostles had not forgotten the first miraculous repast. They at once suspected that Jesus wished to repeat that favour. "Whence then," said they to the Master, "should we have so many loaves in the desert as to fill so great a multitude?" By a similar remark they had once before moved Him to manifest His power, and

[10] If St. Matthew and St. Mark had not already narrated the first multiplication there is no doubt that the critics would have endeavoured to combine the two miracles as one on account of their similarity to each other, and perhaps even to deny them because of their divergencies. This fact, therefore, ought to make exegetes very circumspect, where there is a question of uniting in one event narratives which differences of detail have caused to be separated, or of calling in doubt the accuracy of the Evangelists because in incidents almost analogous they sometimes seem to contradict each other. It may sometimes be that there are two events where we seek only one, and therefore, as in the present case, all contradictions vanish. This second multiplication seems to have taken place to the east of the lake. The current tradition, not very ancient, places it, on the contrary, to the west of Tiberias, after having located the other to the south of Julias. This twofold assertion deserves no serious attention.

therefore they intentionally repeat it. The remembrance of a past still recent, thus called forth, is a discreet request to the Master to exercise His mercy once again. There is a striking analogy between this question of the Apostles and the modest invitation Mary had addressed to her Son when the wine failed at the wedding in Cana. The disciples were evidently advancing in their knowledge of the Master. Like Mary, they were sure of His power, and with a confidence like hers they appealed to His kindness of heart.

This time they found seven loaves, instead of five, among the people, and a few small fishes. On the other hand, the number of mouths to be fed was considerable. They counted about four thousand men. When all were seated, Jesus as before blessed the scanty food that lay before Him. Every one ate what he needed to satisfy his hunger, and there were still left seven full baskets.[11]

Leaving the crowd no time to express its great admiration, the Master went into a boat and passed over to the other shore of the lake.

[11] It is quite plain that St. Matthew and St. Mark have preserved this story of the second multiplication of loaves with no intention of overshadowing the prodigy of the first. In fact, everything in the second is relatively on a smaller scale. It is a desire faithfully to consign what they know to writing, and not the idea of increasing the Master's glory by freely accepting a flattering legend, that guided their pen. Blind enthusiasm would have endeavoured to eclipse the former miracle. Scrupulous accuracy has reproduced the second as a simple diminutive of the first.

CHAPTER VI

AS HE APPROACHES CAPHARNAUM, JESUS FINDS THAT THE DANGER STILL EXISTS

THE PHARISEES HAVE ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH HEROD'S PARTISANS—ON LANDING JESUS SEES THEM APPROACHING—THEY AGAIN DEMAND A SIGN—WHY?—JESUS REPLIES, UNMASKS THEIR HYPOCRISY, AND IMMEDIATELY DEPARTS—HIS THOUGHTS WITH REGARD TO HIS DISCIPLES—THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF HEROD—THEIR GREAT MISTAKE—THEY UNDERSTAND AT LAST. (St. Matthew xv, 39; xvi, 1–12; St. Mark viii, 10–21.)

IN all probability Dalmanutha and the territory of Magedan were to the west of the Lake of Genesareth, and consequently not far from either Tiberias or Capharnaum.[1]

[1] The geographical details here given by the two Evangelists are not very precise. According to St. Matthew, they landed on the coast of Magdala, as some manuscripts say, or of Magedan, as is found in the most numerous and the best of them. If it was Magdala, it is easy to locate that village; if Magedan, our uncertainty becomes complete for the want of historical data in antiquity. St. Jerome and Eusebius, only, tell us that, in their days, there was to the north of the lake a village called Magedena. (See Caspari, *Chronol. and Geog. Introd.*, p. 105.) According to St. Mark, they disembarked near Dalmanutha. But this name too is not found anywhere, either in Josephus or in the *Talmud*. This detail is therefore as unsatisfactory as the former. Quite recently P. Van Kasteren (*Rev. Bibl.*, Jan., 1897), in a very interesting article, suggested identifying El Delhamiyeh, seven kilometres south of the lake and on the left bank of the Jordan, with Dalmanutha, both names con-

Jesus must have been eager to see again the little Galilean flock whom He had left for the time being. He desired to strengthen their faith and to encourage their hopes. His enemies were going to dispute this right. The agitation of the Pharisees was far from being calmed. That jealous sect had in their fury gone so far as to join hands with the Sadducees, their most implacable enemies, in order to share with them their hatred of the Saviour. It is not a rare thing for religious hypocrisy to consent to become the ally of impiety, when it is its interest to do so. As the Sadducees were the friends and partisans of Herod, through them the Pharisees sought the support of the tetrarch himself.

Thus ready to inflict a blow, they awaited only a favourable opportunity. Scarcely had Jesus reached the western shore of the lake, when, advised of His presence, they hastened toward Him, no longer to engage Him in controversy—for that was a sort of warfare they waged with but indifferent success—but to call upon Him to show a sign in the firmament. They had already once defied Him in this manner, and He had consented to offer them but one sign, and that not in the present but in the future, not in the heavens but in the depths of the earth. By insisting they might, if He made a like response now, succeed in placing His omnipotence in doubt. Nothing more was needed to demean Him in the eyes of the multitude and so to hasten His destruction. Indeed, it is not easily seen what manner of sign it was that they sought. Was it the Son of Man advancing in the clouds to the Ancient of days, as Daniel had contemplated Him? [2] Was it their

taining the three consonants in the same order; and Magedan with Ma'ad, which is more to the south-east. According to this learned religious, the country of Dalmanutha was the northern part of Ghor, that is, south of the lake.

[2] *Daniel* vii, 13.

desire to behold the sun and moon covered with a veil, and the stars withdrawing their light, as Joel had foretold? [3] These, indeed, were Messianic signs long since prophesied. But, perhaps, the Pharisees' question had not this bearing. Since, on two occasions, Jesus had just multiplied the loaves in the desert, it is not impossible that the miracle demanded was the sight of the manna falling from heaven [4] to nourish them, as it did for their fathers in the desert. In any case, the Master pays no heed to the achievements of the great men of the Old Testament, Moses, Josue, Samuel, Elias, Isaias, nor to the exact wishes of His present interlocutors. He has perceived the perverse intentions provoked by His omnipotence; He will respond by unmasking the baseness and bad faith of His adversaries. No doubt the heavens are a beautiful book, and they should be proud of their ability to read therein; but they would do better were they to seek for signs nearer at hand. Their competence would be, perhaps, the more easily admitted. "When it is evening," says Jesus ironically, "you say: It will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning: To-day there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering. You know then, how to discern the face of the sky; and can you not know the signs of the times?" How is it that these clear-sighted teachers who were fain to behold amid the clouds the Son of Man foretold by Daniel, do not perceive that the term of the "weeks" fixed by the same prophet is fast approaching at last? If it is the star of Jacob that they long to see on the horizon, why have they not noticed, first, that the sceptre has fallen from the hands of Juda? How can they pre-

[3] *Joel* iii, 15.

[4] The text has: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ or ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, and, from this, seems to imply a sign coming down from heaven as the manna did, rather than a sign remaining fixed, like a new and sudden phenomenon in the sidereal world.

tend to draw conclusions from a single sign appearing in the heavens, they who know not what to deduce from the fulfilment of so many prophecies and from the achievement of so many miracles on earth? To aspire to read so high when they can discern nothing close at hand, is presumption. "A wicked and adulterous generation," says Jesus with a profound sigh, "seeketh after a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas, the prophet." And leaving them there with their desire to circumvent Him, He embarked once more and pushed off in a northerly direction.

Coasting along the well-known shores where, on its rocky promontory, Capharnaum proudly rose with its little cupolas and its graceful terraced dwellings, His soul must have been saddened by bitter reflections. His enemies were seeking to destroy His influence even in those lands which He had dewed with His own sweat, which He had evangelised with His own lips, and astonished with His miracles. What was to become of His nascent Church? Were the faithful whom He had laboriously gathered together, destined to abandon Him in betrayal at the most solemn moment of His struggle? Was Satan able to destroy with a blow the fruit of so much patience, sanctity, and mercy? The situation appeared as grave as the day on which He had forced his disciples to declare themselves when He said to them: "Will ye also go away?" His adversaries' power and malice were great, and the wavering of His best proselytes was almost a ground of despair. On the one hand, their alliance with the Sadducees, Herod's partisans, assured to the Pharisees a force brutal in its strength. For plain folk this is an argument of weight. They readily bend before those whom they deem the stronger. On the other hand, did not He Himself appear in their eyes to have lost His early energy? For some

time they had seen Him fleeing like one proscribed. Was not this trial beyond the strength of poor Galileans, led on at first by the notion of following the future theocratic King, and now disconcerted by an unexpected turn of events? Have not the many objections which have arisen of themselves, and which, perhaps, have been multiplied around them, troubled their souls and shaken their faith? "Take heed," said Jesus, in a tone of tender solicitude, "and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of the Sadducees and of Herod." [5] These words came from the Master's lips at the very moment when the disciples, absorbed in thoughts of a wholly material order, were worrying because they had departed without having taken provisions. They had only one loaf left. Believing that Jesus was aware of their plight, and interpreting literally what they had just heard, they understood it as being a warning never again to accept food unless they knew whence it came; as though there were ground for fearing that the Pharisees and the followers of Herod, in their unpitying hatred, might have defiled or even poisoned it.

This was a gross mistake; and if the Master's thought was on a lofty plane, that of the disciples was, indeed, very low. Sad at finding them ever so dull and so material, Jesus said: "Why do you think within yourselves, O you of little faith, for that you have no bread? Do ye not yet know nor understand? Have you still your hearts blinded? Having eyes see you not, and having ears hear you not, neither do you remember when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up?" They answered "Twelve." "When also the seven

[5] *St. Mark* viii, 15, has "leaven of Herod," whereas *St. Matt.* xvi, 6, has "leaven of the Sadducees." This is not a divergence, the Sadducees being a political party on whom Herod relied.

loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up?" They answered "Seven." "Why do you not understand that it was not concerning bread I said to you: 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' ?"

On reflection, the disciples understood that the leaven of the Pharisees and their allies must be taken as meaning the calumnies and secret jealousy of these sectaries. Nothing has a surer influence upon the masses than the spirit of calumny and scepticism, when spread by hypocrisy and malice. Sometimes it blackens, sometimes, again, it devours, and again it turns to ridicule. It always falsifies; but gradually it changes public opinion, as the leaven, by its sharpness, transforms the dough into which it is put. Then by a sudden veering, the mob detests and accuses those whom the day before it had loved and honoured. The working of calumny, though secret and slow, is none the less certain. This is Jesus' explanation of all the injury that had been done Him in Capharnaum; an injury that threatens to gain over even the Apostles themselves. Let not the hearts of the Twelve, at least, be taken from Him! The present hour more than any other exacts from them absolute fidelity and most generous devotion. He has no joys or triumphs to promise them. The future is full of sorrow, and to accustom them to the awful prospect before them, He feels Himself moved to raise imperceptibly the veil that conceals it.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE WAY TO CÆSAREA-PHILIPPI

THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA — RETREAT TOWARD CÆSAREA—THE IMPORTANT QUESTION: "WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?"—THE OPINIONS OF THE PEOPLE—PETER'S STRIKING CONFESSION — TU ES CHRISTUS — SIMON'S MERIT—TU ES PETRUS—THE INDEFECTIBLE CHURCH SHALL HAVE A HEAD—JESUS FORETELLS HIS OWN DEATH—THE SCANDAL BECAUSE OF THE MESSIAH'S HUMILIATION—HARD LESSON GIVEN TO PETER —BEAUTIFUL TEACHING GIVEN THE MULTITUDE CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT. (St. Matthew xvi, 13–28; St. Mark viii, 22–38, and ix, 1; St. Luke ix, 18–27.)

JESUS and His disciples disembarked on the northern shore of the lake. This was Philip's territory. Therefore they no longer had reason to fear any hostile attack attempted under the patronage of Antipas. The two brothers, as we have already said, bore no resemblance to each other, either in their political views or in their private conduct. Philip had succeeded in procuring his own happiness and that of his subjects by living without external show, free from disturbing ambition, occupied solely in the building of new cities within his states or in the embellishing of those already established.

But was it on the eastern bank of the Jordan that they

landed? Nothing obliges us to believe so, for although He meant to escape, for a time, from the jurisdiction of Herod, it is not clear that Jesus had absolutely bound Himself to flee from it in His latest Apostolic journeyings. It is certain that He had decided not to appear in any centre of importance except Jerusalem. Why admit that He made an exception in favour of Julias? We are therefore inclined to believe, in opposition to the general opinion, that they disembarked simply near Bethsaida, Peter's home, and that there they were enabled to leave the boat in safe hands, while they went to spend a few days among the foot-hills of Hermon.

Our supposition is strengthened by the fact that Jesus was so well known as a thaumaturgus in Bethsaida [1] that no sooner had He arrived than He saw some of the people coming to Him with a blind man and eagerly asking Him to cure him by simple touch. It was a good opportunity to show to the Apostles that His power had not diminished. He therefore consented to work this miracle. But in order to avoid the assembling of a crowd and other similar demands, He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town,[2] into the country. There, with some preliminaries worthy of notice, He proceeded to cure him.

The blind man had not come to Jesus of his own accord. He had been dragged into His presence or even carried there, as the text seems to say. He therefore had scarcely any faith in the Messiah. It was necessary to arouse what little he had. This is why the miracle, instead of being sudden, is worked only gradually together with the growth of the man's faith itself. Jesus began by putting spittle

[1] This is very easily understood if it refers to that Bethsaida which, like Corozain and Capharnaum, had, to its own condemnation, witnessed so many miracles accomplished within its walls. (*St. Matt.* xi, 21.)

[2] St. Mark twice uses the term *κώμη*, which could not be said of Julias and which confirms our opinion.

upon the eyes of the unfortunate man. Then, imposing His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw anything. The blind man tried to look and said: "I see men, as it were trees walking." He had not been born blind, but had become so; otherwise how could he have formed such an idea of men or of trees in motion. His first step toward the cure excites in his soul not only the desire of being perfectly cured, but also a strong confidence in this charitable physician. It is at this moment, when his faith becomes complete, that the miracle becomes so too. Jesus again touched the blind man's eyes with His hands, and the light thoroughly penetrated them. The man at once proclaimed that he clearly discerned all things as he did before he became blind.

Sending him to his home, Jesus simply gave him this advice: "Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody." Thus was the Master forced, after having done good, to demand silence as a first requital of His charity.

Without further delay, He again departed in search of a refuge more retired elsewhere. For as He retraced His steps along the banks of the Jordan, He passed near the basalt bridge of the daughters of Jacob, and thence along the eastern shore of the Lake of Merom, and finally, through groves of oleander and terebinth, to the regions where the sacred river has its source.

Following His custom, He probably passed by Cæsarea, Philip's capital city, without visiting it. The great centres, as we have said, did not please Him. The sight of the corruption, the idolatry, the servility, that was officially spread before Him, had a repellent effect upon His pure and proudly untrammelled soul. Perhaps also prudence counselled Him not to encounter face to face the foremost representatives of the public power, who might

with one powerful stroke disturb the economy of the Messianic plan. That is why He did not announce His gospel either in Tiberias or in Tyre, in Sidon, in Sichem, or in Samaria, although He encountered them on His way. Cæsarea, in particular, was full of painful memories of the past and of the immoral exhibition of paganism in the present. Above the ancient city of Dan, which had witnessed the adoration of the Golden Calf, the Greeks had built Paneas, the city consecrated to Pan. In a deep grotto they adored this god of shepherds; and marble nymphs and satyrs sported around this picturesque sanctuary. Philip, regardless of the pagan customs of Paneas, had established there the seat of his government and had wonderfully embellished the city.[3] The name of Cæsarea-Philippi, which it bore, honoured at the same time both the Cæsar of Rome[4] and the tetrarch who had just restored it.

Jesus spent some days in the neighbouring towns, devoting Himself to the preaching of the Gospel. The irresistible charm of His words, the superhuman character of His works, His inexhaustible kindness, readily gained over to Him the inhabitants of a country half Jewish, half idolatrous, and His ministry was not without its fruits. The Apostles, more tranquil here than in Galilee, had time to examine closely the life, the virtues, and the superior nature of their Master. He Himself was happy to see them searching into the various data of the problem, for He was preparing to propose to them the decisive question on which seemed to depend the religious future of mankind.

[3] *Antiq.*, xviii, 3. See *Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, vol. ii, p. 274 *et seq.*

[4] The modern village of Banias recalls the site and the name of the ancient town. The ruins there are as beautiful as they are numerous. The grotto consecrated to the god Pan is still seen with its sculptured niches and its pagan inscriptions.

Had they, at least, who now for so long a time had been listening to His teaching, witnessing His miracles, hearing the aspirations of His soul, a real faith in His Messianic character? And if they had, were their hearts so deeply penetrated with it that nothing, not even the scandal of the cross, could finally endanger it? This is what must be known.

In truth, the hour might seem poorly chosen for demanding a precise and positive profession of faith from impressionable men who, as regards the person of their Master, never had any but fleeting, transient ideas which betrayed themselves in exclamations more enthusiastic than reasonable. For some days Jesus had performed scarcely any miracles, and the multitudes, filled with admiration and hope, had disappeared, while He Himself, proscribed, seemed to escape the fury of His enemies only by fleeing into desert places and among idolatrous peoples.

And yet this was the psychological moment that Jesus chose to put His solemn question. Previously He had spent a while in self-recollection beneath His Father's eye, and had prayed for those whose faith He was about to test. His soul was visibly perplexed. This is not surprising, since God Himself, notwithstanding the knowledge which He has of the future, seems to await in anxiety the response of the man whom temptation tries. He rejoined the Apostles, and, having walked with them some time in silence,[5] suddenly He asked them: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" [6] This abrupt question betrayed the holy

[5] *St. Luke* ix, 18, who says nothing of Jesus' journey to Cæsarea, supposes that this scene took place in some unknown locality, and just as the Master finished praying. Evidently he did not have before his eyes the other two Synoptics telling that the Saviour was at the time in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea-Philippi. *St. Mark* viii, 27, observes that the question was asked ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, as they went along.

[6] The text of St. Matthew variously punctuated may have the following meanings in addition to the one above: "Who do men say that I am? The

impatience of His soul. The Apostles replied: "Some, John the Baptist, and other some, Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Thus, after the fulfilment of all the Messianic prophecies, after fifteen months of miracles and so many lessons of truly divine wisdom, Jesus seemed to the people nothing more than an extraordinary man, a precursor of the Messiah. To some His influence over the multitudes gives the idea that He is John the Baptist, risen again to chastise Herod and to return the sceptre to the royal race of Juda. To others, the courageous eloquence with which He checks His adversaries, His astonishing activity, His proud independence give rise to the supposition that He is Elias, come to prepare the realisation of their theocratic dreams. Many, carried away by the note of His preaching, which was as penetrating as remorse, and touched, too, by His air of sad resignation and His suggestion of melancholy, which recall Jeremias weeping in the midst of his fellow-citizens, take Him for that prophet. Finally, the majority appreciate His part in Israel only in a general way, and, seeing His powerful works, are content to say that one of the ancient great servants of God has come back to life.

This account of the popular impressions seemed as sincere as it was complete. On hearing it, Jesus manifested no sign of the painful emotion that was breaking His heart. Great souls frequently maintain perfect serenity beneath the hardest strokes of injustice. In a loftier world they hear the applause that consoles them for insults here below. In the joys of the hypostatic union Jesus found strength to be at all times greater than human baseness and stronger than the ingratitude of those to whom He had done favours.

Son of Man?" or "Who do they say I am, Who am the Son of Man?" or again, "What Son of Man do they say I am?" The two other Synoptics represent Jesus as saying simply, "Who do men say that I am?"

After all, this was only the opinion of the multitude; the Apostolic college had reserved its own; and this, if correct, might well comfort Him for the insufficiency of the former. What was their idea of their Master? They must be forced to declare it. Their reply would say if the Church was yet unborn, or if, in fine, by a splendid profession of faith, she deserved to be accepted henceforward as a living reality.

With an especial solemnity that bade them weigh well their response and in a tenderly reproachful tone that seemed to dictate its sense, He said: "And who do you say that I am?" In the grave and dignified attitude of a father deferring his cause to the tribunal of his children, Jesus stood before them, with folded arms, penetrating them no doubt with His powerful gaze, while He awaited their reply. Peter had it all ready, and, by his ardent, impressionable nature, accustomed to speak the first, he gave way to none on this occasion. "Thou," he exclaimed, with the tone of conviction of a man inspired, "Thou art the CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD." As we hear this fervent, free-spoken declaration, we seem yet to see the sinewy hand of the son of Jona stretched out energetically toward Jesus to accentuate with special vigour this admirable profession of faith. It was a sublime scene; every one's soul vibrated in unison with that of Peter. The Master was filled with happiness. The Church had formulated its first creed.[7] Henceforth nothing shall be final or authentic unless it pass by this same mouth of Simon Peter, who is become the official organ of the Apostolate. The ardour of his faith, the spontane-

[7] No doubt, upon several other occasions the disciples had recognised the Messianic character of Jesus, but it was in the agitation of enthusiasm, or, so to speak, of surprise, that they had let their confession fall from their lips. Here their minds are calm. The question gives them the opportunity for reflection, and the reply is the exact expression of most certain convictions.

ity of his testimony, the sincerity of his love, have gained him this high prerogative. Several, perhaps, believed and loved as much as he; but, more timid or less enthusiastic, they had stood there embarrassed. By being the first to speak, Peter has won a primacy of honour and jurisdiction that will be his forever. From this time forth it will be his prerogative to teach and govern the Church, with that immovable stability which Jesus had foreseen when, looking upon him for the first time, He had surnamed him Peter or Rock.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," He said to him, His eyes beaming with divine joy; "because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven!" Flesh and blood would have told him what they had told the Pharisees, His enemies, or, at most, what they had told the people who were blinded by a kind of half-belief. It is light from above that reveals to him the Master's divine physiognomy in its true colour. Thus, again, in the succession of ages, it will be to heavenly inspiration and not to the human preoccupations of a vain science or of a timid philosophy, that Peter will turn to gather the universal tradition of the Church, and to dictate the rule of our faith. Asking from God alone strength and light, he shall not, when he must speak as the head of the faithful, know the failures of passion or of error.

Here and now, he is to receive official assurance of this immunity; and since he has proclaimed what he thought of the Master, the Master desires to tell before all what He will do for him. "And I say to thee," Jesus goes on, "that thou art Peter, and upon this rock[8] I will build

[8] The Greek translation of St. Matthew has not entirely preserved the play upon words which is found in the original Syro-Chaldaic, and which may be found also in the French rendering. *Kepha* was at the same time the word

my church,[9] and the gates[10] of hell shall not prevail against it." He speaks in the future, because He Himself is still alive. The royal succession is not begun. As long as He is in this world, another head of the new society would appear superfluous. To Him alone belongs the burden of its care. But when He shall have quitted earth, although still remaining the real head of the Church, He will be no longer its visible head. Then He will have recourse to an intermediary who shall govern the Church for Him. This intermediary is to be the very Apostle whom He has just selected. Peter, however, must not be appalled at his mission. If he is officially to represent the Master, he may be sure that his personal views, his prejudices, and his preferences shall be silent, and that God alone will inspire his speech. Whenever he shall have to resist, challenge, or combat, strength from on high shall sustain him against his enemies. More lasting than the rock of Paneas on which the hand of man has just erected a temple to Augustus, and which the storms, the generations, the ages shall gradually wear away, the *rock* planted

signifying a rock, and the name given to Simon. Not venturing to give to a man a name with a feminine ending, the author of the Greek text puts it: *Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ.* Nevertheless he could have employed the word *πέτρος* instead of *πέτρα* in the second member of the phrase, and would have been authorised by excellent authors (see the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, l. 342; Herodotus, ix, 55, etc.) if he did not wish to use *πέτρα* to designate Simon himself.

[9] This is the first time that Jesus calls the society of the faithful the *Church*. Inasmuch as on this day she takes possession of life, it is right that she should receive also her name. Henceforth this name, vague in its ordinary meaning, like the word *synagogue*, will denote exclusively the society of Christians.

[10] Among the people of the Orient, the gates signify power, in figurative language, since it was at the gates of a town that rulers were accustomed to sit in order to dispense justice. In Jerusalem, in fact, the Sanhedrim was seated at the Gate of Nicanor, and the assembly of doctors at the Gate of Suza. From this ancient custom comes the name Sublime Porte given to the Sultan's court, and here, therefore, the Gates of Scheol, or hell, mean either the power of death (compare *Isa.* xxxviii, 10; *I Cor.* xv, 55), or the empire of Satan or of evil. In either case, immortality and supreme power are plainly assured for the new Church.

by God shall stand eternally.[11] Its stability shall be the very stability of the Church. It is the Church's essential basis; and though it must be granted that the foundation is not the entire structure, we must, at the same time, acknowledge that without the foundation the structure would not exist.

To mistake the great law of the Christian hierarchy according to which Simon Peter and his successors are, by right, the heads of the Church would be, therefore, to destroy the first thought in the divine plan, to deny what the Master affirms, and to substitute an oligarchy for the most perfect of monarchical systems. For Jesus, continuing His promise, declares that Peter has not simply a passive primacy, serving as a support to the mass of the Church, but also an active primacy, in the absolute influence which he shall exercise over all the flock. He will be a government as well as a foundation. "And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." The key is given only to the father of the family, to the master of the house or of the town. If the Church is a society, Peter shall be its Head; if it is a kingdom, he shall be its King; if a flock, he shall be its Shepherd, gathering or scattering the sheep in his prudent judgment, granting or repressing the title of citizen, opening or closing the door of his house.

[11] It may be that the grand sight of the temple of Augustus, resting with its mass of white marble columns upon the rock of Paneas, naturally suggested to Jesus the beautiful picture which He drew in order to define the part Peter was to play in the future history of the Church. The comparison once established between the immense rock and the surname of Simon, that between the dying paganism and the nascent Church had to follow. St. Matthew alone commits to the pages of his Gospel the important promise made by Jesus to Simon-Peter. On this point, the others contain an omission which would be inexplicable if they had drawn from one common written source.

This house is the Church in time, but in eternity the Church becomes heaven.

Such is the manner in which the Saviour's question had called forth the Apostles' profession of faith; this profession of faith had proved the life of the Church; the Church had received a head and a promise of perpetual indefectibility. This was more than sufficient to make this incident the most important and most productive event since the first days of the Messiah's ministry. The Master had just proved that His long-continued efforts had led the Apostles to recognise Him as the Christ. This first definite result obtained, He could now undertake to teach them what sort of Christ and Messiah He was to be.

Here began for the disciples, in a most unexpected form, the revelation of the second part of the divine plan. Events followed each other rapidly: the hatred of His enemies pursuing Jesus even into Galilee made it plain that sad and tragic events were soon to take place. It was time bravely to face the troublous periods that were approaching. First of all, happy though He was at the Apostles' act of faith, Jesus strongly advised them, however, not to preach that He was the Christ. Such a declaration on their part would have excited terrible fury in some and dangerous enthusiasm in others. They must prudently guard the faith they have in the depth of their hearts and complete it by believing, however painful it may be, in a Messiah suffering and humiliated as the necessary preliminary of a Messiah triumphant and glorious. True faith could feel no hesitation. In Jesus it saw not only the Christ that was looked for, but also the Christ that was to be crucified.

For the moment the Apostles, who admitted the first of the two articles of this rudimentary creed, energetically rejected the other. They could see in it only a scandalous

paradox. Jesus is not unaware of this, but nevertheless He determines to assert it. Their eyes must become accustomed, now by sudden and awful illuminations, and again by dim half-lights, to the terrible prospect of Calvary. Their present faith seems able to endure a first blow. He inflicts it without delay. The broad track of the lightning-stroke with which He now draws aside the veil of the future, will expose before them the bloody sacrifice with all its horrible details.

And, indeed, according to the providential plan, which Jesus soon lays before them, the Son of Man must repair to Jerusalem, the very centre of hostilities. There He shall suffer all the woes and disgrace that the fury of the Scribes, the Chief Priests, and the Ancients of the people can suggest, until He shall have been done to death. Yet, even in the face of this catastrophe, His triumph is not to be despaired of. For the victory of His enemies shall be but momentary, and He, stronger than death, shall rise again the third day to enter into everlasting glory. This in a few words is what they are approaching. As one of the Evangelists observes in connection with this, "He spoke the word openly."[12] Formerly it was the Temple, the brazen serpent, Jonas, that served Him as emblems in prophesying these mysterious events, and His allusions were not understood. From now on He relates the history of His passion with a steadiness of gaze and a firmness of soul that startle and overwhelm His hearers.

His disciples were, in fact, stupefied, overwhelmed, shocked. Peter, who stood near Him, still proud of the success of his profession of faith, sought, in his indignant affection, to take Him aside and to reproach Him for speaking thus. "Lord, be it far from thee," he said to Him, "this shall not be unto thee!" His admiration for

[12] *St. Mark* viii, 32.

the Master, his friendship, his faith, everything in him deprived him of the power of considering even the possibility of such a misfortune. Besides, if the wicked were capable of plotting such a thing, was not Jesus far more able to offset it? In all this Peter was judging according to human views. He was forgetful that there could be and that there was, in fact, something above any human will, namely: the divine justice. This demanded a complete and infinite expiation; hence had Jesus uttered that decisive word which Peter had not noticed: "The Son of Man *must*[13] suffer the fury of the wicked." To deter the Master from accepting the great sacrifice was a proof that he had not understood the mystery of His mission into the world; it was tempting the Man-God, as the spirit of darkness had done, to renounce the redemption of man, so that He might avoid suffering. Filled with holy indignation and suffering him to go no farther,[14] Jesus turned upon His rash disciple, and with a word humiliated him whom He had honoured shortly before, and chastised him for this thoroughly human counsel, as before He had rewarded him for an inspiration all divine: "Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal to Me; because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."

Jesus gave this severe lesson to Peter in the presence of all the disciples. If He treated him harshly, it was because He saw behind him all the Apostles with the same thought and the same objections. Therefore, after this sharp rebuke, He resumed the drift of His remarks in order to lift the lesson to a higher plane and at the same time deepen its significance. He made a sign to the people to

[13] The pitiless δεῖ is emphasised in the three Gospels.
[14] *St. Matt.* xvii, 22, and *St. Mark* viii, 32, indicate that Peter had hardly begun to speak (ἤρξατο).

draw nearer. "If any man will come after Me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me!" So the true disciple of the Gospel must first of all put aside all dreams of human glory, of well-being, of pleasure, of wealth, of temporal dominion. Christianity has nothing in common with these vanities. The members of the new society must prove their vocation sincere by repudiating without exception the illusions of selfish and carnal Judaism. To accept Jesus and His doctrine is to take upon one's shoulder the emblem of death and the renouncement of human joys; it is to accept freely the punishment of the condemned man, who carries the cross and walks with it through the city, knowing that he is to die thereon. The Christian, in truth, is destined to stretch himself upon the fatal tree, even though others may not nail him to it. Dead to his passions, to evil longings, to the old man, dead, perhaps, even physically, is what one must become in choosing to follow Jesus Christ.

This symbol of a cruel and humiliating death, borrowed from the punishment of the cross, was evidently to some extent prophetic. The disciples will understand this later on. Sanctified and glorified by the blood of the Saviour, the infamous gibbet shall become the yoke beneath which all lovingly bow their heads, and those only shall be true Christians who know how to live and die at the foot of the Tree of Redemption.

These radical theories were received by all as a paradox. Jesus, paying no heed to their protests, at once resumed His thought under another form. His object was to encourage them to make the sacrifice He demanded. "For whosoever will save his life," He went on, "shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel, shall save it." For to seek to preserve one's life according to the material notions of earth, is to sacrifice

it by forcing it to vegetate without true light, without virtues, without hope for eternity; it is to prefer the transitory to the eternal. Who does this, desires the vanity of a dream, and he shall have it and shall die of hunger. While, on the other hand, he who gives his life to bear testimony to the truth either in word, or in work, or even to the shedding of his blood, is certain to find it again strong and glorious and henceforth immortal, after the sacrifice which he has offered is completed. "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" Can anything counterbalance a treasure which is the whole of man? Whatever we may acquire during the present life, however precious it may seem, is only for a while, and then it slips from our grasp; the soul's lot will be unchangeable for eternity. These two thoughts constitute true wisdom, and throw a clear light on our most essential duties.

They must needs, therefore, put an end to earthly hopes regarding the Master. He forbids such to His true disciples. Earthly things are too ephemeral to find any place in the Kingdom of the Son of God. No doubt the Messiah will come later on as King, clad in the robes of triumph; not in vain have they read this in the prophets; but, then, time having reached its term, His subjects shall be the elect, His empire heaven, His era eternity. He will appear in the midst of the glory of the Father, surrounded by the angels, a true Messiah-King, He will render to each one according to his merits in the solemn distribution of His justice. Then, "He that shall be ashamed of Me," says Jesus, "and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty."

If they think that this manifestation seems to be too

long deferred, they must not forget that it is soon to have a prelude capable of satisfying all their impatience. "Amen, I say to you," continues the Master, "there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death till they see the Kingdom of God coming in power." Jesus could not delay the inauguration of His spiritual triumph on earth. He will cast down the idols, strike the wicked, and enlighten the heathen. Then, raising His cross up above the world, proclaimed to all peoples by the Apostles who will go before Him like a legion of Angels, glorified by His Father Who will sustain and bless His work, He will establish the greatest, noblest, most universal kingdom that has ever existed. It is the near approach of the kingdom of truth, of justice, and of love, the preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven, that must be awaited. Happy he who shall be worthy to be inscribed therein, and to taste of the joys thereof!

Such was the end of this discourse, which gave a new horizon to the teaching of the Master. Once again a division must have occurred among the disciples. There was, indeed, sufficient reason for some to exclaim: "This is a hard and even horrible saying. Who can endure it?" Better even than the words uttered in the Synagogue at Capharnaum were these calculated to revolt those whom the Master commanded not only to eat His flesh and drink His blood, but also to die themselves upon His cross.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRANSFIGURATION

WHY JESUS PERMITTED HIMSELF TO BE SEEN IN A STATE OF GLORY — HIS RETREAT TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR PURPOSES OF PRAYER — THE PHENOMENON OF THE TRANSFIGURATION — WHAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE MAN-GOD—JESUS RADIANT BETWEEN MOSES AND ELIAS — THEIR HEAVENLY CONFERENCE — THE EMOTION OF THE THREE APOSTLES—THE GREAT TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER—QUESTION CONCERNING ELIAS —AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN THE DISCIPLES ARE WORRIED AND THE SCRIBES TRIUMPH—THE LUNATIC — JESUS' INDIGNATION — THE FATHER'S TOUCHING PRAYER—THE POWER OF FAITH—THE DEMONIAC IS HEALED—JESUS' TRIUMPH. (St. Luke ix, 28–43; St. Mark ix, 2–29; St. Matthew xvii, 1–21.)

JESUS had declared, in terminating the foregoing discourse, that some of His hearers should not die without having seen Him in His glory. We understood Him as speaking of His twofold coming, spiritual in time and glorious at the end of the world. Still there is nothing to prevent us from seeing in His words a direct allusion to that mysterious and astounding event, His Transfiguration, which was soon to occur. We may, indeed, consider this as an anticipated representation of the future com-

ing of the Messiah-King. By manifesting Himself in the ideal and divine beauty of His superior life, Jesus seems to have desired to give His three disciples, who saw Him, a momentary view of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of its unspeakable splendours.

About a week had elapsed[1] since the great discourse in which the Master had announced His coming trials, and this unexpected revelation filled the Apostles with profound discouragement. The awful prospect was at all times before them. Too calmly and too precisely outlined for it to be merely imaginary, they could no longer hope, after Peter's failure, that Jesus would decide to prevent its realisation. The very thought of beholding so sad an end to His earthly career filled the Apostles with pain; in their hearts, because they loved Him; in their minds, because they no longer had any understanding of the divine plan; and in their souls, in fine, because they saw the ideal of the future vanishing together with all their more or less human and worldly hopes. Such a state of mind was dangerous. To bring about a strong reaction, Jesus resolved to let them behold a little light by the side of the sombre events which He had foretold.

He, therefore, took three of His Apostles, Peter, James, and John, whose influence generally determined the moral dispositions of the others, and with them withdrew to a high mountain[2] to pray. It was probably near evening.

[1] St. Luke says: *about eight days after*, while the two other Synoptics distinctly say that it was *six days after*. We can harmonise these statements by remarking that St. Luke counts both the day on which Peter made his profession and that on which Our Lord was transfigured, while the others count only the intervening days. But the expression ὡσεί, "about," in *St. Luke* is the sign of an approximative indication. They all mean to indicate the lapse of a week.

[2] None of the Evangelists gives the name of this mountain, and, in ecclesiastical tradition, the first indication we have is evidently an incorrect one. It is that of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (*circa* 333 A.D.). If we accept this statement, the Transfiguration took place on one of the heights of the Mountain

The silence of nature in desert places, the isolation on heights that seem to bear one nearer to heaven, naturally incline man to prayer. The Apostles endeavoured, at first, to follow the Master's example and enter into communication with God. But gradually drowsiness weighed down their eyelids and they ended by falling asleep.

In the meantime, not far from them, Jesus remained deep in the contemplation of purest love. His soul was flooded with heavenly light, and a strange transformation was taking place, at the same time, throughout His whole body. It is not a rare thing to see a man become suddenly transfigured under the influence of a great and noble passion. His eye gleams, his countenance brightens with a brilliant light, and his whole being, as if enveloped in an electrical

of Olives, not far from the basilica built by Constantine: "Inde non longe est monticulum ubi Dominus ascendit orare et apparuit illic, (*sic*), Moyses et Elias, quando Petrum et Joannem secum duxit." (*Itin. Ter. S.*, Geneva, fasc. i, p. 18.) Some time after St. Cyril in his *Catechesis*, xii, 15, supposes that Mount Thabor was the scene of the event. St. Jerome, *Epist.* xlvi, *ad Marcel.*, and *Epitaph.* lxxxvi *Stæ. Paulæ*, adopts this opinion of his contemporary, and from that time it became the only accepted one for all the pilgrims of the Holy Land.

Mount Thabor is a very beautiful eminence, covered with terebinths, evergreen oaks, carob-trees, and lentisks, and picturesquely rounded off on all sides. To the east it dominates the plain of Esdrelon. We find it mentioned more than once in Scripture, for it gave its name to, or borrowed it from, a fortified town built on its summit, having dependencies and belonging to the tribe of Issachar. (*Jos.* xix, 22; *Paralip.*, vi, 77.) Its importance from a strategic point of view, causes it to be mentioned by Polybius liv. v, 70, under the name of Atabyrion, in connection with Antiochus the Great, who, according to this historian, fortified it, after having taken possession of it in 218 B.C. There is no account of its being depopulated or abandoned later on, and when it reappears in history (67 A.D.), Josephus, *B. J.*, iv, 1–8, who pitched a camp on the higher plateau, speaks of its inhabitants, τοῖς ἐποίκοις, and distinguishes them from the soldiers he had established there.

It is somewhat surprising after this to find St. Jerome looking upon Thabor as the *high* and *solitary* mountain, ὑψηλὸν, κατ'ἰδίαν, of which the Evangelists speak. Not only was Thabor inhabited in the first century of our era, but the summit has always been clearly in view and the heavenly manifestation would have been as visible, to the inhabitants of Naim, Endor, and the mountains of Galilee as to the three disciples who accompanied Jesus. Let us add that all the other indications of the Evangelists agree in placing anywhere but in Galilee the important scene

glow, seems to enter a new sphere. The transformation produced by ecstasy attains a still sublimer degree. The ecstatic ravished beyond himself, or, at the least, forcibly seized by the sentiment of the divine presence, finds himself, in fact, under the immediate and sensible influence of that presence. Then there arises a second cause of transfiguration no less powerful than the first: it is God acting upon the ecstatic like the sun upon the objects to which it gives heat. This explains how it was that Moses, descending from Sinai, had presented to the view of the people a brow so radiant that the eye could not bear the sight of it.[3] To the illumination that spread from his soul to his features, was added the visible reflection of divine glory in the bosom of which he had sojourned. But in Jesus all this must have been produced not only in an eminent degree, but with a new and incomparable element of splendour. For the hypostatic union kept His soul in

of the Transfiguration. Thus Jesus went away from Cæsarea-Philippi for the express purpose of fleeing from the enemies that threatened Him in Galilee, and then, within six or eight days after, we find Him again in the very midst of Galilee. This is very unlikely. But His departure from Gaulanitis is clearly specified in *St. Matt.* xvii, 21, and *St. Mark* ix, 29. The latter particularly states that after the cure of the lunatic, perhaps a long time after, Jesus returned to Galilee to pass through it secretly so as to reach Capharnaum and from thence ascend to Jerusalem. What could be more clear? The Scriptural indications appear to us the more decisive as the traditional indications only date from the end of the fourth century, and they who mention them allege no reasons or more ancient data whatsoever in support of them. More naturally should we seek on one of the abrupt and desert foot-hills of Hermon the high and solitary mountain which Jesus ascended with His three disciples to pray there free from any intrusion. We have visited these localities, and have felt, on climbing these hills, which overlook the whole course of the Jordan down to the Dead Sea and, consequently, the whole of the Holy Land, that they, rather than Thabor, agree with the indications in Holy Writ. (*Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, vol. ii, p. 288).

As regards the crowd gathered around the lunatic and the Scribes who were amongst them, we have found no difficulty. They were at the gates of Cæsarea-Philippi. But this capital of the tetrarch, though counting many pagans within its walls, was nevertheless the city of a Jewish prince, having synagogues and Scribes or Rabbis, like all the important centres of Palestine.

[3] *Exod.* xxxiv, 29 *et seq.*; *II Cor.* iii, 7.

intimate and perfect relation with the Divinity. The soul reacting on the body could not but penetrate it with the rays of divine glory. Since Jesus was the Son of God in human flesh, we may say that His ordinary state must have been that of glory, and that He came forth from it only by veiling His divine brilliancy by a positive and special act of His power.

At the point in His ministry at which we have arrived, it was important for Him that His disciples should have some knowledge of that inner, transcendent life that constituted His supreme happiness and His true majesty. Will they, after having seen Him in His divine splendour, still dream of the perishable greatness of earth in His behalf? In any case, the humiliations and sufferings that await Him shall have a character none the less strange but less discouraging for those who shall have beheld the two distinct sides of His life: the one turned toward earth, transitory, insignificant; the other toward heaven, true, eternal. Can the evil that reaches only the body really trouble the soul flooded with divine consolations, or can passing insults hurled by the wicked against the just one prevent his sovereign glorification and his triumph in a better life?

Therefore the Master's soul, in the enjoyment of the beatific vision, had but to dispel the mist with which it was concealed, and under the influence of this internal radiance His body at once became transparent. His very garments seemed penetrated with light. They were bright with a whiteness such as no fuller upon earth, as St. Mark says, could reproduce. His head more than all was marvellously beautiful. The soul ordinarily is reflected in the features of the countenance; they are its faithful and privileged mirror. The divine face shone like the sun.

At the same time, the higher world itself came down to

admire the glorification of the Son of Man. The supernatural brightness shed round by these new-comers from another life uniting with the light that came from Jesus, formed as it were a vast nimbus, a sort of tabernacle of light or luminous firmament that sheltered the most august meeting this world has ever witnessed. For on the right hand and on the left of the Saviour were two men, accredited representatives of the ancient glories of Israel, Moses and Elias, the twin heroes of the old theocracy. They were bent in respect before their Lord, and, contemplating in Him the perfect fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies, they discoursed on the end that awaited Him in Jerusalem.[4] The astounding crime by which this people, killing its Messiah, was to seal its final reprobation, filled their Israelite souls with pain, and they besought God to forestall such a transgression. It was in vain; notwithstanding the prayers and the intercession of her just men, Jerusalem would consummate her apostasy. She was the city that had slain the prophets, and now she meant to lay her sacrilegious hands upon the Lord's Anointed and to attempt the destruction of her God.

For His part, Jesus, contemplating with love the cross which He saw already prepared in the Holy City, pointed to it with enthusiasm. Thus He taught Moses that there might be something more consoling than to die by the kiss of the Eternal,[5] and Elias that there was something grander than to be borne away to heaven in a fiery chariot:

[4] It is *St. Luke* ix, 31, who tells us of the subject of their conversation, ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ, and thereby permits us to establish a close connection between the Transfiguration and the talk on the way to Cæsarea. Elias and Moses teach the Apostles a lesson by their acknowledgment, in the name of the whole of the Old Testament, of a Messiah suffering and humiliated. The word ἔξοδος means simultaneously the going out and the end, by death, resurrection, and ascension, of the Messianic life, the beginning of which St. Paul (*Acts* xiii, 24) will call εἴσοδος.

[5] This was the expression used by the Rabbis to characterise the happy death of the great leader of Israel.

namely, to mount upon a cross to expiate there the sin of the world, and to rise again to enter heaven truly triumphant.

The conversation was near its end, and the Apostles still slept. Again, later on, will they so sleep in Gethsemane; but Jesus, though permitting them to sleep then, to spare them the sight of His anguish, awakened them now to fortify their doubting hearts. A ray of His glory that He lets fall upon them suffices to draw them from their deep sleep. As they awake, their eyes behold the sublime spectacle. The Master in His superhuman aspect they recognise at once; the two strangers they know perhaps by the characteristic signs commonly attributed to them in Jewish tradition, or more probably by the conversation that they overhear. What, indeed, are these citizens of another world? Are they simply souls, clad in the appearance of bodies; really men or pure, symbolical apparitions? Their faith is untroubled. They recognise the accomplishment of a mystery: the law of Moses paying homage to the Gospel, and the great figures of the past bending before their full realisation in the present; this suffices for them. This heavenly vision delights them. They pray that it may not end, and when it bids fair to vanish, Peter, in his anguish and with naïve simplicity, cries out: "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here! Let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elias." It was as if the fear of passing the night in the open air might bring the holy meeting to an end. St. Luke and St. Mark are right in saying that Peter, overwhelmed and beyond himself, knew not what he was saying. His appeal remained unanswered, or rather he had scarcely finished it when the disappearance of those for whom he wished to provide a shelter told him of the futility of his desire. A bright

cloud enveloped them.[6] It was the glory of God, and the Apostles who understood it were struck with fear. From the midst of the cloud was heard a voice which said: "This is My beloved Son,[7] in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

Overwhelmed by this series of wonders, and deeply moved by the sense of the immediate presence of God, the three Apostles had fallen prostrate upon the ground. Jesus, approaching, touched them and said: "Arise and fear not." They looked. The Master, again in His ordinary condition, was alone before them; all else had disappeared. Thus are the Law and the Prophets to pass away, while Christ alone remains forever.

This glorious vision had ceased probably before dawn. The time had come for them to rejoin the Apostolic group. As they went down the mountain Jesus took care to say to them: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." These last words, reminding the Apostles of His prophecy concerning His fatal struggle with His enemies, held their attention. They dwelt upon it and wondered what, indeed, could be the meaning of the return from death of which He once more spoke to them, and at what time they would be free to make known so prodigious an event. The postponement of the Messiah's glorification until after His death was for them always an unanswerable enigma. In any case, they said

[6] The expression *αὐτούς* appears to apply only to those for whom Peter would build each a tabernacle, Moses, Elias, and Jesus. Hence the reading of certain manuscripts bearing *ἐκείνους*. Some exegetes, however, think that according to *St. Luke* ix, 34, not only Jesus but the three Apostles may have been enveloped in the luminous cloud with Moses and Elias, and that it was this that caused their fear. The text may, no doubt, be interpreted in this manner, but the context prevents it, because it cannot be seen how the Apostles would have heard the voice *ἐκ νεφέλης*, issuing from the cloud, if they themselves had been enclosed within it.

[7] *St. Luke* ix, 35, in the best manuscripts has *ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος*, the *elect*, instead of *well-beloved*.

to themselves, if the realisation of the triumph is deferred till after Jesus' death, and if His death is so near, how explain that Elias does not stay henceforth upon earth to fulfil the part of precursor? Is not prophetic tradition unanimous in declaring that he is to be there at the solemn moment? And they immediately made known their difficulty to the Master: "Why then do the Scribes say that Elias must come first?" And He answered: "Elias, indeed, shall come and restore all things. But I say to you that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them." The Apostles understood that John the Baptist had been the Elias announced by the prophets, and their minds dwelt sadly on the thought that the Master, far from hesitating to deliver Himself up to His enemies, would seek no other road to triumph than the pains and the humiliation of death.

In the meantime, from the narrow paths of the mountain they had just emerged into the valley where the rest of the Apostolic band were impatiently awaiting them. Their surprise was great when they saw their companions surrounded by a large and boisterous multitude. Some Scribes—their malice discovered or pursued the Master everywhere—seemed to be provoking the tumult and to be turning it to their own advantage.

At the moment of Jesus' arrival, says St. Mark, the excitement gave way to fear; and soon this fear itself was succeeded by a general enthusiasm. For the crowd threw themselves in His way with unmistakable signs of
ct and at the same time with a display of curiosity.
eyes of all and more especially in the humiliated
ce of His disciples, Jesus saw that His enemies
advantage of His absence to engage in a dispute
ey had triumphed. "What do you question

about among you?" He demanded, turning severely upon the Scribes. They made no response. Their malice could not but be silent. The facts themselves spoke and were enough to compromise not only the disciples but also the work of Jesus. What had happened? A man—the most concerned in the affair—came forth from the multitude, and, divided between despair of a lost cause and the gleam of hope aroused by the Saviour's arrival, courageously broke the silence. "Master," he said, falling on his knees, "I have brought my son to Thee having a dumb spirit; I beseech Thee, look upon my son, for he is my only one. And lo, a spirit seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him down, and teareth him, so that he foameth, and he falleth often into the fire and often into the water; he foameth and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away; and, bruising him, he hardly departeth from him. And I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not."

The last words explained the popular agitation as well as the emotion produced in both camps by the sudden intervention of Jesus. Whether because the Apostles' faith was not lively enough, or because an evil sentiment of envy had entered their hearts and made their union with the Master less profound—the preference Jesus had just shown for three of them might have wounded the others—they had found themselves wholly incapable of healing the youthful demoniac. Their repeated and fruitless attempts had resulted only in exciting the malicious comments of certain Scribes who were present. Without sufficient knowledge to reply to their objections, and without authority to accomplish the miracle which would have silenced them, they were beaten, and the cause of truth was plainly in danger. Would the Master's arrival change the state of things? They were anxiously wondering.

As the father finished his explanation Jesus' brow darkened and grew sad. Coming down from the splendour of the mountain had He then to encounter the passions of the plain? After God's testimony is there still room for man's denial? Yes, at the foot of this Sinai, whence He comes back glorified by the Law, the Prophets, and the Father Himself, it is, indeed, the triumphant mockery of His opponents that He has heard, and it is a beginning of general incredulity that He beholds. Then, like Moses, He feels the accents of indignation rising to His lips, and He strongly rebukes the laxness of His own and the unbelief of the others. "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" The law-giver of Israel in his anger showed only bitterness; Jesus, after this reproach, proves His charity. He desires not the death of the wicked, but their salvation; and His law, though the law of truth, is none the less the law of mercy. "Bring hither thy son," He says quietly, as if He wished to shake off the painful impression from His soul; and the boy was brought to His feet.

From the true picture which the father has already given us of his son's illness—nervous convulsions, inarticulate cries, privation of all the functions of the senses, intermittent attacks, gnashing of the teeth, and foaming at the mouth, the violence of the crisis that overcomes and throws down the patient in whatever place he may be, and finally stupor and general weakening after the attack—we recognise all the marks of epilepsy. St. Matthew, according to whom the father calls his son a *lunatic*, carefully preserves the local belief. For the popular prejudice attributed to the phases of the moon a great influence over this evil. However, as the immediate action of the demon is at the same time mentioned by our Evangelists, there is no doubt

that the epilepsy was merely the form or the natural result of diabolic obsession.

As he appeared before the Master, whether because the demon's fury was aroused, as had happened on other occasions, or because the boy himself had been seized by too deep an emotion, the epileptic attack suddenly came upon him in all its intensity. Jesus stood calm and authoritative before this painful spectacle. "How long time is it since this hath happened unto him?" He said to the father. "From his infancy," he replied, "and oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us." Jesus responded: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

In the Master's thought, to believe is to identify one's life with that of God and to participate thenceforward in the divine power. That is why nothing is impossible to true believers. Having by faith become sons of God, they must receive visibly the fruits of so sublime a sonship. By the domestic hearthstone the child is strong with the very strength of his father. "Believe, then," the Saviour seems to say, "and the infinite power of God will pass into your hands as it would have passed into the hands of My disciples, if their hearts, a moment ago, had been sincerely joined with Mine and with God." Faith and power are one in the kingdom of the Gospel.

These words, which seem to displace the power that operates the miracles, astonish, disturb, and transport the poor father. He would like to believe, and to believe strongly enough to have power; but it is the desire of faith that he feels, rather than faith itself. Yet at the command of paternal love everything about him, eyes, lips, hands, and heart even, unite in crying out: "I believe!" But, humble and candid, he will not conceal the

feebleness of his nascent faith. On the other hand, if it is to remain too feeble for the working of the miracle, his woe would be inconsolable. "I do believe, Lord," and he adds, "help mine unbelief."

Meanwhile the crowd was visibly increasing. Restless, sympathetic, impatient, they were pressing around Jesus. It was then that, with a gesture of authority and a threatening voice, He said, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, Go out of him and enter not any more into him." At once the cries and the convulsive spasms increased; it was the last effort of the vanquished enemy leaving his place. The crisis was awful, and the boy, falling immediately in complete prostration, lay as if lifeless. They said: "He is dead!" But Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to consciousness and gave him full of life and health to his father, who was intoxicated with joy. The Scribes were beaten. Their mockery and their wicked words recoiled upon themselves. They had to withdraw, confused and humiliated, while the multitude let forth its enthusiasm, impressed as it was by a sense of the greatness of God.[8]

When the Apostles were alone with Jesus in the house where they were being entertained, they surrounded Him to ask the reason of their failure. Perhaps they still felt the severe rebuke which had been given to the crowd shortly before by the Master, and which seemed to be directed also at them. "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus said to them: "Because of your unbelief. For, amen, I say to you"—and here the Saviour employed hyperbole the better to inculcate His thought—"if you

[8] The three Synoptics relate this cure of the lunatic, but so independently one from the other and yet agreeing so entirely as to the main facts, that once more we find it impossible to entertain the thought of a common written source from which they drew. The account given by St. Mark is especially full of life and true to nature.

have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting."

Was there, in these last words, a reproach addressed to the disciples, who were at all times too absorbed in material thoughts, or who were perhaps too much given to some exterior distraction? Did He mean to say that, like the thaumaturgus, the demoniac himself ought to be prepared by prayer and fasting in order to merit a miracle? Many have thought so, but it is hardly probable, and it seems more natural to understand that faith, in order to be equal to the impossible and more particularly to be efficacious, when it is a question of commanding demons, must find its twofold nutriment in prayer and in voluntary suffering. Prayer lifts us up to God, and mortification, proclaiming our empire over our body, releases us from those earthly miseries which check our moral flight. Both combine to render the soul great enough in its act of faith to vanquish all the powers of hell.

CHAPTER IX

LAST VISIT TO CAPHARNAUM

Jesus Again Speaks of His Death—The Tax-Gatherers of Capharnaum—Ought the Master to Pay the Tribute?—Theoretical and Practical Solutions of the Question—He Pays for Peter—Jealousy and Dispute Concerning the Primacy—Jesus' Explanation — Admirable Theory as Regards the Primacy—The Man Whom the Disciples Forbid to Cast Out Demons—Scandal—The Crime and Misfortune of Those Who Seek to Destroy the Church by Scandalising Her Children—The Shepherd's Love for His Sheep. (St. Matthew xvii, 22–27; xviii, 1–14; St. Mark ix, 30–50; St. Luke ix, 43–50; xvii, 1–2; xv, 3–7.)

Amid all these glorious incidents, at no time is Jesus without the thought of His expiatory sacrifice. By this thought He is inspired to go and make His last visit to Capharnaum, and to this thought, on the way, He unceasingly endeavours to lead back the minds of His disciples.

Thus, when He sees them full of pride at the ovations of the multitudes—their childlike natures passed swiftly from extreme discouragement to the liveliest enthusiasm—He said to them: "Lay you up in your hearts these words." For a day cometh when the memory of them shall not be

too much to keep their faith from failing at the sight of the humiliation reserved for the Son of Man. For it is irrevocably decreed: "He shall be betrayed into the hands of men and they shall kill Him." However, this shall not be forever, for on "the third day He shall rise again." These words, calmly spoken in a tone of conviction, brought back suddenly a vague impression of terror upon the group of travellers. They were sad during all the time of the journey, yet they dared not to invite the Master to give longer explanations, so great was their fear to learn too much of so painful a subject.

When they reached Capharnaum, the cold and almost hostile reception given them proved that Jesus' prophecies were well founded, and that they must no longer count on the triumph of former days.

They had scarcely established themselves when already Peter was roughly accosted by tax-gatherers, who said to him: "Doth not your Master pay the didrachma?" [1]

[1] The *didrachma* was a small piece of silver worth two Attic *drachmas*, half of a Hebrew *shêkel*, or of a Roman *stater*, about thirty-one cents in United States money. (Josephus, *Antiq.*, iii, 8, 2.) This was the amount which, in the Mosaic law (*Exod.* xxx, 13; *II Paralip.* xxiv, 6; Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii, 9), enforced again on the return from the captivity (*Esdras* x, 32), every male Israelite, from twenty to fifty years of age, was bound to pay annually for the support of the Temple and for the public worship. The Rabbis were probably exempted. There was therefore something odious in this tardy demand on the part of the collectors; for this tax was paid after the 15th of *Adar* (February-March). At that time they had not demanded it of Jesus either because the collectors had not met Him on their route, or because He was then at the height of His popularity in Galilee. They exacted it now because they met Him just at Capharnaum and because they contested His character as prophet. We know, moreover, that they profited by the approach of every great festival to dun again those in arrears. (Cf. Greswell, *Dissert. Princ. of Harm.*, viii.) Some have thought that there was question here of a civil impost collected in Cæsar's name, or even in the name of Herod, the Tetrarch, and payable any day in the year. This would not be impossible. The Romans claimed a real suzerainty over Galilee, and, for his part, Herod did not hesitate to levy a tax periodically upon his own subjects. Ordinarily it was just the very sum exacted for the Temple that the Jewish sovereigns demanded for themselves. (*Antiq.*, xiv, 10, 6.) Later on, Vespasian followed their example (*Bell. Jud.*, vii, 26),

"Yes," responded Peter, and he went into the house where Jesus was, to ask of Him the amount in question.

Before Peter had time even to explain, Jesus began to question him.[2] Either the conversation between the collector and the disciples had reached His ears, or He wished to prove by His divine knowledge His right to an exemption of which He would not take advantage. "What is thy opinion, Simon?" He said to him. "The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom; of their own children or of strangers?" Simon responded: "Of strangers"; and Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free."

If it was a question of paying the tribute to the Temple could He, the Son of God, and therefore Master of the Temple, be forced to pay the tax for His own house? Did He owe any ransom to His own Father, when He was giving even His life to satisfy the exactions of His justice?

If it had to do with the civil taxes, Jesus could appeal to another reason for exemption: His theocratic royalty. The kings of earth reign only by permission of the King of Heaven. Their power comes from on high, and there it finds its sanction. They being simply God's delegates, would it not ill-become them to demand the impost from the well-beloved Son of Him Who delegates them?

Clearly, in either case, the Master was referring to His divinity. He proved it, soon after, by a miracle. "But that we may not scandalise them, go to the sea, and cast

and it may be questioned if, in so doing, he was not simply re-establishing what the Cæsars had regulated before him. However, the term τὰ δίδραχμα employed without other explanation was commonly understood as the tax for the Temple, and the first hypothesis with its explanations seems the more natural.

[2] That is the real meaning of the word προέφθασεν. We may call attention also, in the intimate tone of the conversation, to the affectionate relations that existed between the Master and His disciples. The Apostle is addressed by the familiar name of Simon. St. Matthew (xvii, 24) is the only one who records this incident for us.

in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take; and when thou hast opened its mouth thou shalt find a stater; take that and give it to them for Me and thee." His first thought is to quiet the conscience of the weak. Excellent as are His reasons for exemption from the obligation of the tax, the people, indeed, might be unable to understand them. Some would be shocked by His refusal as by an act of revolt, and others would profit by it to justify their own insubordination. But the Son of Man is come to edify, not to scandalise. He decides to pay the tribute, but He will pay it as God. Though submitting to human laws He will make it clear that by a higher right He was dispensed from them. The King will employ His royal power in order to obey. He could have found, indeed, in the common treasury or in that of His friends the trifling sum demanded by the tax-gatherers, but by paying in that way He would identify Himself with the multitude and would lose sight of the fact that He was the Son of the King of Heaven. The condescension with which one renounces a right does not mean its suppression; frequently one holds it a matter of honour that the right be proved. If, therefore, as really happened, in fact,[3] a fish eager and docile in the divine service brings from the depths of the sea the pittance which discharged Peter's obligation along with His Master's it is to prove in the eyes of the multitude that, though Our Lord suffers man's exactions, He is absolute Master of nature, and is in all things superior to mankind.

It is noteworthy that He paid for Himself and for the disciple to whom He had promised to delegate His

[3] Those who have deemed it materially impossible for a stater or a three-franc piece and a fish-hook to be lodged in the throat of a fish, are not aware that the *Chromis Simonis* of the Lake of Tiberias hatches its eggs and raises its young in its mouth, until they are able to care for themselves. We have seen this for ourselves on buying one of these fishes which we ate at Tabigah.

authority, as if Peter, His future vicar, would henceforth be but one with Him. The very terms that the Master had used, plainly indicated that the official representatives of the Church, whatever might be their name, would, by divine right, be forever exempt from material obligations that are incompatible with their mission. The services of a superior order which they were to render to humanity would well seem, even to the most exacting, a sufficient compensation for this privilege.

Thus was Peter's particular place among the Twelve emphasised more and more. This latest incident proved it. It suddenly revived the discussion that had excited them during the journey and of which we must say a few words.

The question was which of the Twelve was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. This was truly a puerile and innocent bit of vanity betraying all the simplicity of these humble Galileans. When the Master arrived the discussion was becoming still more heated. On their faces He read the trouble of their souls, and demanded an explanation. What means all this dissension which He has noticed on the way and which still continues? Nothing more was needed to recall them to themselves and to make them blush for their foolish concern. At first, says St. Mark, so great was their confusion, that all remained silent. But they knew well that Jesus was not ignorant of that which He desired to make them confess, and they began resolutely to ask Him themselves, as St. Matthew indicates, the solution of their difficulty. "Who is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?" they said to Him. In reality they changed somewhat the question that had divided them. Before, it was more personal, since they sought to know which one, at that moment, was the first in the society founded by the Saviour. By making it more general they

somewhat concealed the unseemly vanity of those who had propounded it. Jesus sat down as if to add greater solemnity to His answer. He called the Twelve, so that none of them might lose this sublime lesson, and began by saying, as St. Mark, whose text we follow, tells us: "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all."

At the same time, the better to emphasise His reply—the Orientals in their teaching took pleasure in speaking to the senses the more surely to reach the mind—Jesus called a little child [4] to His side, embraced him kindly, and, placing him in the midst of His disciples, He said: "Amen, I say to you, unless ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." What use, then, in claiming its highest dignity? Before they shall know who is to be first or last, they must first be incorporated therein. It is innocence, simplicity, self-denial, candour that open its gates.[5] The nourishing of secret ambitions, the desire of command, of flattering distinctions, will mean inevitable exclusion therefrom. The Kingdom of Heaven is a family of children under the authority and love of a gracious Father.

Nevertheless, if they desire to know the order of merit and the degrees of real greatness, here is the principle which serves as the basis of the whole hierarchy of souls. "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven." Thus the absence of all self-seeking, the desire to be unnoticed, and, like the child, to count for nothing in society, will beget in man the humility, the spirit of sacrifice, and charity

[4] Early tradition had it that this child was Ignatius, later Bishop of Antioch and celebrated for his glorious martyrdom. (Nicephorus, *H. E.*, ii, 35.)

[5] "Amat Christus infantiam," says St. Leo (*Serm.* xxxvi, *de Epiph.*, 7, 6), "quam primum et animo suscepit et corpore. Amat infantiam humilitatis magistram, innocentiæ regulam, mansuetudinis formam."

which alone are the real steps by which he rises. The more he devotes himself to the service of others through self-depreciation, the more he advances in merit before God; the more he seeks to be last through self-denial, the more surely he shall become first. In spite of the apparent paradox of it, nothing is more profoundly true or more divine than this doctrine. It has inspired prodigies of heroism and of sanctity in souls that have understood it, and whose rule of morality it has become. The Church has at all times done justice to the men who, thoroughly devoid of thought of self, have been found generously filled with the spirit of God.

However, in the Kingdom founded by Jesus Christ there is another order of dignity, which arises not from the individual worth of men, but which God communicates as a gratuitous gift: namely, the hierarchy of the ministry. It is with regard to this especially that the Apostles appear to be troubled. In His reply the Master touches briefly on this point. He clearly explains the truth concerning this hierarchical greatness, and gives them to understand that instead of being man's possession, it is exclusively God's. For the mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ, which different souls receive in different degrees, separates them, no doubt, from the multitude and assures them an undeniable superiority, but this superiority is but a borrowed one. The greatness of the Apostle, of the bishop, of the priest, is no other than the greatness of the Master Who has chosen them. Children remain children although they have in them Him Who makes them doctors and Apostles. If they were not children they would not be of the Kingdom; only such children possess God and the dignity of God. "Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in My name," continues Jesus, "receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me but Him that

sent Me." This was as much as to say that, properly speaking, there is in the Church only one priesthood, His own, of which the Apostles shall become the ministers. Thus all personal self-seeking must be suppressed. If they have any influence, any success, any honour, they must attribute them, not to their personal worth, but to Him alone Whose envoys and representatives they are. May the tool boast of the work it has done. Does not the merit belong to the workman who has used it? The only honour then to dream of in the new Church shall be that of submitting generously to the divine influence in order to transmit it to others; and if, in the dispensation of grace, there are different degrees in the new priesthood, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that, in the last analysis, these degrees are united in the one eternal Pontiff Jesus Christ Who lives, speaks, and acts through those whom He has delegated. For the Master alone remains first, second, and third in the Kingdom of Heaven. His co-labourers rise only in proportion to the efforts they make in self-effacement and in the showing forth of Him in His divine and unique activity. The Christian theory of the primacy is summed up in this wise: God alone is of any value in His ministers; man is nothing but by his God.

As they hear these sublime assertions, the Apostles perceive how frequently they have been mistaken in their human calculations. More particularly, they did not know that He Who came in the name of the Lord ought to be received and respected as the Lord Himself. Since they are now well disposed to make avowals, they determine to tell all and to confess a recent fault committed through their jealous exclusiveness. It is John who speaks. We shall see him come forward more than once in the days that are to follow. His soul seems to have passed through

a special crisis of religious enthusiasm at this time. "Master," said he, "we saw a certain man [6] casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us." And Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for there is no man that doth a miracle in My name and can soon speak ill of Me, for he that is not against you is for you."

At first glance this last apothegm would seem to contradict another saying of the Master's: "He who is not with us is against us." In reality it is not so; for while elsewhere He spoke of works similar to His own in result, but not in principle, namely of false miracles due to diabolical intervention, here He means prodigies attempted in His name. In the first case, the foundation of the work was infected with evil; that is why not to be with Him was to be against Him. In the second, the cause of the work is not bad, for to demand or to attempt a miracle in His name, even though with imperfect faith, signifies that one is a friend rather than an enemy; this is why He declares that such a one is not against Him. The truth is that the hostility of the one and the goodwill of the other are measured by the interior dispositions that actuate them.

He who was attempting to cast out devils thus was, if not a minister of the Gospel authentically delegated by the Master, at least a soul enlightened by the divine word, touched by grace, and growing by faith in the supernatural life. In either hypothesis, they must let him go on and must show him their goodwill. If he was a novice in the faith, a little child scarcely yet born in the Heavenly

[6] Many commentators understand that this man had the desire but not the power of casting out devils. "It is not unusual," says Maldonatus, "for a verb to denote what one would like to do and not what one has done, the effort, but not the effect (affectum, sed non effectum)." It appears that the right of exorcism had as yet been granted only to the twelve Apostles.

Kingdom, a new arrival on the Gospel frontier, what a crime it would be brutally to repel him and to stifle the spark that was growing within him! If he was in heart and mind one of the Apostolic family, though not following it ostensibly, what a sacrilege to pretend to bind a power that God has authorised, an influence which, far from aspiring to the highest posts in the hierarchy, was being exercised with humility and disinterestedness in the advancement of the Messianic work!

Unfortunately and inevitably, jealousy, that poisons all undertakings; intolerance, that checks them; blind zeal, that destroys them without distinction, will often hide beneath the mantle of the Church to check the free expansion of her holy activity. For far greater reason then must we expect to find them in the world, perhaps under different names, but with even greater fury. Faithful souls, whether at the summit of perfection, or as yet hardly born in the Christian life, whether in the hierarchy of the ministry or in the humility of every-day life, will always meet with difficulties and stumbling-blocks. Philosophy in her pride will follow them with arguments, politics with interested suggestions, passion with its dangerous influences. But woe to the man that shall scandalise them, small or great as they may be, in their humility and their simplicity! Rather than be a persecutor, an evil counsellor, or a bad example for them, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck,[7] and he were cast into the sea." This punishment was less severe than to

[7] It is of little importance to know whether such a punishment was in use among the Jews or not. As a matter of fact, we know from Josephus, *Antiq.*, xiv, 16, 10, that it was practised in Galilee: *τοὺς Ἡρώδου ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ κατεπονττώσαν.* It was employed also in Phœnicia. Jesus here seeks to show by a picture the awfulness of attempting the ruin of one of His faithful. The stone spoken of was that which was turned, not by a slave, but by an ass (*μύλος ὀνικός*). Ovid (*Fasti*, vi, 318) speaks of it: "Et quæ puniceas versat asella molas." The expression itself is found in Julian (*Orat.*, 6, p. 198).

fall into eternity beneath the awful weight of a soul lost through another's fault.

And yet this crime will not be a rare one. After stigmatising it severely, Jesus stops for a moment. His gaze penetrates the future, and with a glance He embraces all the actions of man against truth and virtue, and heaves a deep sigh of sadness and of indignation. "Woe to the world because of scandals," He cries out, "for it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to the man by whom the scandal cometh!" The only means of preventing this abuse of liberty would be the suppression of liberty itself; but in that case divine wisdom would destroy its own master-work, and undo that which it had so marvellously organised. Would man still be man, were he no longer free? The providential plan permits, rather, that there shall always be souls desirous of evil in themselves and around themselves. "*It must needs be*," says the Master. However, as nothing obliges man to be perverse, since in reality he always retains his free-will, he will be eternally responsible to God for having chosen and desired evil, whereas it was so reasonable to prefer the good. If the thought of tempting simple, upright souls comes from within him, let him violently stifle it in his heart. If it comes to him from without, let him forcibly reject the vile suggestion. Let him suffer anything rather than co-operate with evil or enter into an alliance with the wicked. Cut off the hand [8] and the foot, pluck out the eye that would lead to scandal. It were better to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, one hand, or one

[8] There is no doubt here at least that Jesus, on two different occasions, made use of the same figures. If St. Mark alone had the triple metaphor of hand, foot, and eye, it would be a question which of the two evangelists had put it in its right place. But St. Matthew by repeating it here, after having already mentioned it in the Sermon on the Mount, shows that Jesus more than once in His discourses used the same thoughts in the same form and before the same hearers.

foot than to be cast unmaimed into hell-fire, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. For every one shall be salted with fire; and every victim shall be salted with salt."

It is clear that scandal is going to be the great danger of the moment, the engine of war which the Pharisaical party will put in action to attempt the destruction of the Galilean Church, built up with such patience and guarded with such solicitude. This thought arouses the Master's holy wrath and inspires the awful picture of the punishments reserved for the guilty. Isaias had said to the Jews,[9] that from the gates of the city they would behold the bodies of the enemies of Jehovah, of the wicked and of traitors, lying in the plain. Worms would never cease to devour them, nor fire to consume them, not merely because the criminals would be innumerable, but because it would be God's will to leave this fearful spectacle to continue there forever. It is the prophetic menace that Jesus takes pains to repeat.

The workers of scandal, too, will be counted among the adversaries of Jehovah, for they shall have killed His faithful. They in turn shall be seen stretched upon the horrible battle-field, where, victims of the anger of heaven, they shall be penetrated with salt that smarts but which will preserve them from decomposition. This salt will be nothing else than the fire employed in consuming them. At the same time, remorse, like a pitiless worm, will feed upon their hearts. Thus, after the days of mercy, the eternal sacrifice shall be accomplished wherein nothing shall be wanting to restore the order which for a moment had been disturbed. All creatures shall be before God in the only state that belongs to them, that of victims—some, the happy victims of love in the glorious transformation

[9] *Isaias* lxvi, 24.

of heaven; others, the accursed victims of hate in the fire of the pit of hell. A mystical salt shall envelop them in eternal suffering. And that is how he who shall not have consented to keep the salt of wisdom upon earth shall find the salt of woe amid the braziers of eternity. "Salt is good," Jesus adds; "but if the salt become unsavoury, wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you, and have peace among you."

Alas! how often the absence of this salt in humanity was to trouble the religious life of the Church and to hinder her development! How often pride and ambition, instead of humility, were to beget schism, heresy, infidelity! How often cruelty was to estrange the poor weak lamb from the fold! How often fanaticism with lips closed against charity, was to put human passion in God's place! Fools! for the want of salt, they have lived pitiless in their jealousy, cruel in their pride as rebellious heretics, persecutors, hypocrites, calumniators, ravenous wolves within the fold. In requital they shall have found in death the salt of eternal justice.

To withdraw themselves from God's influence and to remain unbelievers is in itself a great crime on the part of the Pharisees; but to deprive God of the souls to whom He gives His tenderest care, to rob the Shepherd of His most cherished sheep, and to violate the rights of love, no less than those of property, is the most daring of crimes. "See that ye despise not one of these little ones," says Jesus, "for I say to you that their angels in heaven[10]

[10] These ideas of the protection of angels assured to man were no cause of surprise to the ancients. The pagans had it from their poets that Jupiter sent spirits to earth to protect mortals, to watch and to judge their works (Hesiod, *Opera et Dies*, lib. i, vers. 121); their philosophers taught that these spirits were our witnesses in the present and in the future life (Plato, *De Legibus*, lib. x). As for the Jews, in their Holy Books they read that God had given to the just man an angel guardian (*Ps.* xxxiii, 8, etc.); to their ancestors an angel to guide them to the desert (*Exod.* xxxiii, 20, etc.); to their

always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven." The punishment will be striking if it is in proportion to the dignity of these souls whose protectors, like princes in the Heavenly Kingdom, contemplate face to face the King of Kings.[11] It will be certain, if it is intrusted to friends so devoted and to hands so redoubtable. Besides the princes of the Heavenly Kingdom are not the only avengers of the souls whom it was their mission to guard. Did not the Son of Man Himself come down from heaven to save that which was lost? The fruit of His redemption shall not be destroyed with impunity by scandal. His anger against these ravishing wolves shall be measured by His love for His cherished sheep. He will be unsparing, and will eternally exact from the scandal-giver the soul he shall have ruined, whether it be the soul of the priest or the soul of the simple neophyte, the soul brave in faith and in charity or the soul doubting and undecided.

The formal and immutable will of the Father, the Son knows it well, is that there shall not perish even one of these faithful, humble little children, born but yesterday to the Gospel, simple and unpretentious, despite their virtues and their merit, and all worthy of respect, inviolable, sacred, because they are branded with His own name and destined to share His glory.

privileged nation, Michael as protector (*Daniel* x, 13); and, finally, to the peoples of the earth, as later on to the different Christian communities, heavenly spirits to watch over their prosperity (*Deut.* xxxii, 8); cf. Schöttgen on this passage of the Gospel, p. 151. These doctrines, ancient as the world, belong to the sum of truth that has nevertheless remained the inalienable possession of mankind.

[11] This picture is taken from the customs of the Orient, where the subjects were only rarely admitted into the presence of the monarch and where it was permitted only to the highest nobles to remain at all times before him. The true servants of the Gospel, therefore, have as protectors the highest powers of Heaven.

CHAPTER X

DISCOURSE ON THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES

Jesus' Reasons for Speaking of Fraternal Correction — Prudence and Caution in Charity — The Denunciation to the Church—Excommunication —How Often Must One Forgive?—The Master's Admirable Response—The Parable of the Debtor. (St. Matthew xviii, 15–35.)

In all probability, lively words had been exchanged during the discussion concerning the primacy; hurt feelings had been produced and rancour threatened to trouble the cordial understanding that had thus far reigned among the Apostles.

Thus obstacles were being multiplied to compromise the work of the Messiah, step by step with its advance. Following close upon rivalry, jealousy, and the danger of scandal came intestinal dissensions, personal dislikes, that awful solvent that dismembers and kills the most strongly organised societies.

Jesus observes this danger, and, leaving the evil no time to spread its venom, He says: "But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother." Unity, family-love, the care for one's honour

and sanctity are sufficient to inspire this conduct. Inasmuch as all the disciples of Jesus Christ are brothers and members of the same society, the Church, their first duty is to love one another sincerely. If one happens to offend either by giving scandal, by the suspicious character of his morals, or by compromising his faith, or by doing us a personal injury, immediately without waiting for him to go farther, or even to recognise his error, we must go and seek him, and endeavour kindly and bravely to show him the sin, the wrongs which as yet he does not see. A false brother would have scorned him in his weakness or would have abandoned him in his sin. We shall avoid this double excess by a prudent charity. Alone together, we shall make known to him his fault against us or against society. If our heart finds words sufficiently persuasive to move the poor erring one to reflect, we shall have saved our brother, and our merit will be the greater in proportion as the crime of him whose scandal was destroying it was detestable. Our self-love, it is true, must be sacrificed in giving up our desire for public reparation; and our pride, too, which might have moved us to stand aloof in our anger and await the first advance from him, and, perhaps, even our right, which might have exacted public justice. But what matters that? Is not the reward worth the sacrifice? To have saved him who has a guardian angel in heaven, to have led back the lamb which the Son of God came to seek and to redeem on earth, is no ordinary achievement. It means a share in the very work of the Redemption, by recalling to life one who was dead. It means the gaining of our brother, and the life restored to our neighbour enhances the value of our own. The saved soul cries to heaven in our behalf, as the lost soul cries out against us.

"And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two

more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand." This will not be, as yet, a public declaration, but this first formality of justice may fill him with a salutary fear; the support that one will find in those who accompany him will aid, perhaps, in convincing and in persuading him. Ashamed of his fault with which all together reproach him, but without too much publicity and by appealing to his honour, and, at the same time, frightened by a procedure that begins in the presence of witnesses, he will, perhaps, repent. The witnesses themselves may offer him a way of arranging the matter more acceptable than one's own proposals for peace.

"And if he will not hear them, tell the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." Here end the external marks of charity. If the culprit, hardened in his sin, scorns the solemn warning of the Christian society, if he means to persevere in his crime against God and against man, we can still pray for him in the depths of our hearts, but as far as our public relations are concerned the bonds of fraternity are burst. Having ignored the voice of authority within the family, he deserves that all fraternal obligations toward him should cease. He is henceforth like the heathen who has never known the truth, or like the publican who has denied it by his misconduct.

This right of excommunication is the Church's arm of defence. Peter first received it in the name of all, after his famous profession of faith on the way to Cæsarea; the Apostles receive it individually in the words which the Master adds: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." A strongly organised society must have the

right to cut off the rotten members that disgrace her, and it is in the hands of her rulers that this power is placed. The Christian Church has a twofold life, a life of earth and a life of heaven, the one a preparation for the other. To deprive one of communion with the Church here below must be to deprive him of communion with God on high. For there is but one only Church, in different conditions. That Church alone shall be saved. He who remains not with her, who is not a member of her, is and shall be given over to damnation and to eternal pain. Excommunication on earth necessarily has its counterpart in heaven. God ratifies that which the authority of His hierarchy solemnly decrees.

This authority has no need of speaking by the mouth of all its representatives in order to judge the guilty. "If two of you," [1] says Jesus, "shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in heaven." Whereby we see that the ecclesiastical power must take counsel before chastising the guilty. It were becoming, even, that its sentence should proceed as a prayer, and leave it to God to grant it if it be just, or not to grant it if it be guided by error or by passion. Whenever the accused is truly culpable, God will ratify it. If Jesus has promised to be present wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, for far greater reason will He be by the side of His ministers when they fulminate excommunication against the obdurate.

[1] This agrees with Jesus' thought of sending the Apostles or the disciples not separately, but by twos. This left nothing to the caprice of men. For the validity of excommunication, He demands the perfect agreement of two souls who ask God to execute their sentence. This agreement, which is difficult for the wicked, who are frequently able to unite their malice but seldom their hearts, is a guarantee given to the faithful against the abuse of a power which would be formidable were it not wisely regulated.

Such were the rules [2] of charity and of justice which were to preside over the development of the various nascent Churches, and to guard them against the elements of corruption which humanity ever bears within itself. We know how from the beginning, every Christian community was only a family in which each member watched over his brother's virtue, while the father exercised supreme authority in expelling from his hearth the refractory and perverse son. Everything was done with kindness, sanctity, and justice, forewarning, segregating, and chastising. Those were happy times when the title of Christian thus surrounded men with salutary legislation and an influence wholly of love! To be sure civil society kept her rights over the disciples of Jesus Christ, but without interdicting the religious society from the exercise of hers. The State had only the jurisdiction of bodies, the Church held and exercised full jurisdiction of souls. Under this discipline—accepted by all and consequently terrible to bad Christians — of cutting off without pity the dead branches of the tree, the Christian society, ever more vigorous after the most cruel operations, soon filled the world with her beauty and her fruits. Then it was seen that cutting off the hand and plucking out the eye insured fulness and fecundity of life. The Church need not seek to know the number of her children; she lives only by their worth.

Peter, as the appointed head of this Church, and perhaps, for personal reasons, also—for it is somewhat probable that the dispute concerning the primacy arose be-

[2] It has been said that in this Jesus only brought to the Christian society a practice in vogue in the Synagogue. Whatever the correctness of this statement, which is sustained by several passages of the *Talmud* (see Lightfoot on this passage of St. Matthew, and Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet.*, 97), it cannot be denied that, if the discipline was not new, the spirit was absolutely new; it was a grafting on the stock.

cause of him—approached Jesus and asked Him, how many times Church discipline or individual charity ought to forgive a repentant sinner: "Till seven times?" He certainly considered this a great concession. Jewish casuistry, relying on certain passages of Scripture,[3] counselled indulgence to the extent of three times to the same culprit; but this was the limit of forgiveness. Peter thought, indeed, that the New Law, full of love and gentleness, was to go farther, but to pardon seven times—this was the number of the jubilee year—seemed to him to be the supreme effort of kindness. He knew not that in this pardon of injuries man simply grants to others what he himself is to obtain in far greater proportion from God. He forgives that he may be forgiven. Therefore indulgence in favour of one's brethren could have no other limits than one's own frailty. Besides is it not of the essence of true love to engender inexhaustible mercy, particularly where there is repentance? Jesus replied: "I say not to thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven times." [4] That is to say indefinitely, as He hastened to prove by a touching parable.

"Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants." The King is God, and we are His servants. Often, before the solemn and final review of the works that determine our eternity, the Master finds an opportunity of inviting us to examine our lives and to consider our wants. Be it the voice of conscience accentuated by grace, be it a word that stirs and enlightens the depths of our soul, a stroke of adversity, or a sign given us by death, it is ever God

[3] *Amos* i, 3; ii, 9; *Job* xxxiii, 29, 30.

[4] St. Hilary and St. Jerome, explaining this passage, find in it an allusion to the words of Lamech. (*Gen.* iv, 24.) According to this, forgiveness would balance vengeance; and good would be the perfect counter-weight of evil.

Who awakens man from his torpor and demands from him an account of his life.

"And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents." It was an enormous sum, nearly ten millions of our money, if Jesus spoke of the Hebrew talent, or at least six if He meant either the Egyptian or the Attic[5] talent. The magnitude of the sum was no doubt intended by the Master to show us how numerous in the eyes of God are the faults of human life. There was no need of a long examination to prove this enormous deficit. A single glance over the records was sufficient. It was because he perceived the awful position he was in, that the wretched man had not come of his own accord, but had to be dragged before the king. There was no investigation; it would have added nothing to the evidence. The faithless servant acknowledged his squandering by the surprise he manifested at having committed it. Thus every day, the sinner enters new crimes to his account in the book of life which the angels keep in heaven, but he is only vaguely conscious of it, until the hour is come for a serious reckoning. Then what surprise! what woe! what despair!

"And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." By Jewish law the insolvent debtor, with his family and his goods, became the property of his creditor for six years;[6] but it must not be supposed that Jesus takes His comparisons only from Jewish customs. He seizes upon whatever peculiarities in the usages of other peoples may put His thought in relief; thus the law of Israel per-

[5] The Hebrew talent is valued ordinarily at about $973.58; the Egyptian at about $537.60; the Attic at about $480.

[6] *Levit.* xxv, 39; *IV Kings* iv, 1; *Amos* viii, 6.

mitted neither prisons nor tortures for the debtor, and yet these figures complete the parable. The Master has recourse to them the better to demonstrate that in the settling of his account the sinner, even though he gives all he possesses, is still incapable of offering true satisfaction.

Happily the master was kind; a prayer could move him and repair what had seemed irreparable. The servant knew this, and, "falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." If he had any merit in not denying his debt, he was wrong in deceiving himself with the hope of being able to pay some day. This is the ordinary illusion of people in debt. They seek to gain time, but time never betters their condition. It is fortunate for sinners that God does not exact a long-continued interior work for the reparation of their faults. One good movement of the heart suffices. The sentiment of bitter regret that suddenly penetrates us, and casts us at His feet, checks His justice on the instant. Like the master in the parable, He has pity on the poor debtor; He not only grants him time, He remits his debt. This is much more than the unfortunate man could have dared to ask. By falling on his knees, he has aroused compassion; by his cry for grace, he has gained liberty; by promising to satisfy, he has seen his whole deficit made good. Can he ever forget such generosity?

"But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence." In itself it was a small amount, scarcely sixteen dollars in United States money; compared with ten thousand talents, it was as nothing. Are the offences we sometimes refuse to forgive much more when we place them side by side with those for which we ask God's pardon? They are like a drop of water beside the ocean. But we forget that the

eye of Him Who has pardoned us, follows and observes us. The servant of the parable, had he thought that his master was to learn of his conduct, would, no doubt, have been more politic.

"And laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Wilt thou pay what thou owest?" [7] The recollection of the mercy he had prayed for and received shortly before should have withheld him from dragging him before the judges, much more from treating him with such brutality. This is a strong picture of the Christian who, still favoured with divine indulgence, wishes, in the name of his wounded pride, to exact from his brother the most humiliating reparation.

"And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt." As if by chance, the suppliant had, however, employed the same form of prayer which had recently saved his creditor. But the miscreant did not even notice it. His harshness arouses our indignation. Alas! are we not like him ourselves?

But, at last, justice asserts her rights and pitilessly effaces what mercy had inscribed. "Now, his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done." If God were not possessed of all knowledge, we might say that the angels and saints take care to call His attention to such revolting crimes. But this detail of the parable is unimportant. "Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had com-

[7] The best critics read this as an interrogation or as a conditional: ἀπόδος εἴ τι ὀφείλεις, instead of ὅτι ὀφείλεις.

passion on thee?" This condescension touches us; the king makes a comparison where all comparison seems impossible; for he had been kind who owed nothing, and the guilty man has been cruel who owed everything to the king. This comparison explains what follows. The master at once summons the criminal; this in itself is a sign of anger. One feels that severity is about to take the place of indulgence. It is time for inexorable justice, and the culprit is handed over to the torturers [8] until the entire debt is paid.

It has been rightly observed that since the debt had already been forgiven, the king could not justly have proved false to his word. This is undeniable, and we know that "God's gifts are without repentance." But here we must understand that the servant is thrown into prison, not for a debt already settled and forgotten, but for the heartlessness and unusual barbarity which he had just manifested. However, it is his forgiven debt that still determines the degree of his malice and his guilt. In this way we may solve the difficulty which the Scholastics, after St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church,[9] raised concerning the reviviscence of remitted sin. God, summoning the wicked servants before Him by death, will not demand a new account of sins pardoned, but He will place His mercy and theirs with pitiless severity side by side, and all the sins that have been covered by the divine indulgence shall fall like an aggravating circumstance upon the scales of eternal justice. The unfortunates shall

[8] The torturers here are simply the jailers who guard their prisoners in captivity, or even those men who, by Roman law, can torture debtors with the lash and with leaden shot. (Cf. Livy, ii, 23.)

[9] St. Aug., *De Bapt. c. Donat.*, i, 12; St. Greg. the Great, l. iv, *Dial. c. Ult.*, etc.; St. Thom., *Summa*, 3 p., q. 88; Cajetan, on the *Epistle to the Romans*, xi, 21, have solved exactly this very difficulty: "Repetuntur debita semel donata, non ut fuerant prius debita, sed ut modo effecta sunt materia ingratitudinis."

be cast into prison where they shall endure woes upon woes in vain for the payment of a debt which in their helplessness they can never pay. They shall pay forever and shall never wipe out the debt. "So, also," Jesus adds, ending the parable, "shall my Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

CHAPTER XI

THE SUMMONS TO MANIFEST HIMSELF IN JERUSALEM

The Worldly Arguments of Jesus' Brothers—The Motives That Inspire Them—The Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem—Summons to Appear in His True Light—The Views of Divine Wisdom—Jesus' Hour—The Ministry in Galilee Is Ended. (St. John vii, 1–10.)

There is a moment in human undertakings when all things seem to conspire in demanding from those who conduct them supreme and decisive resolution. If Jesus had been merely a man, we might say that for Him this moment had arrived. Not only was Judea hostile to Him—we know [1] that He refrained from appearing there again lest He might push too far the homicidal hatred of His adversaries—but even Galilee was at last assuming a threatening attitude. Emissaries from Jerusalem were actively at work. Several of His first followers, startled by His declarations and deceived in their hopes, had publicly deserted Him, and were seeking to separate from Him those who were still faithful. The Apostles themselves were passing through a moral crisis fraught with danger. It was time for a diversion.

When Hannibal was encamped almost at the gates of Rome, Scipio deemed it necessary to hasten beneath the walls of Carthage, and by this daring stroke to restore all when all seemed lost.

It was in this wise, probably, that those relatives of Jesus argued, whose singular conduct at this time is described for us in the Fourth Gospel. They found, on the one hand, that the situation was becoming critical for Him in Capharnaum, and, on the other, that an opportunity for appearing in Jerusalem could neither be delayed nor be better chosen.

It was near the Feast of Tabernacles. This was the last great solemnity of the Jewish year. It was celebrated with an enthusiasm, a concourse of caravans, a boisterous excitement, all of which was calculated to aid any daring attempt in the way of Messianic manifestation. Established at first to celebrate the memory of Israel wandering in the desert, it derived a new meaning from the particular circumstances of time and season. On the fifteenth of *Tisri*, the end of September, the vintage was over, and with it ended the series of the principal harvests of the year.[2] Thanksgiving was then offered to the Lord for the fruits given to earth. And, afterward, the principal object of the feast being the commemoration of the events in the desert, the Jews devoted themselves to characteristically symbolical demonstrations. They left their houses, and, in tents or huts of leafy branches, they took up their quarters for eight days on the terraces, in public squares, and on the ramparts. In the Temple, the morning libations commemorated the miraculous water that had leapt from the rock beneath the rod of Moses, and in the evening the two candelabra represented the pillar of fire that had guided the people amid the sandy deserts

[2] The Jewish year commenced on the twelfth of October.

of Pharan. Sacrifices of thanksgiving served as a final expression of the people's gratitude.[3] The multitude was the greater since the season afforded leisure to every one, and because, again, whoever had for any reason been dispensed from appearing at the other two feasts of the Jewish year, was obliged to be present at this one. One's absence would have exposed him to the severe criticism of every true Israelite.

Moved by these considerations, the brothers of Jesus, who were preparing to go up to Jerusalem, came to Him, and said: "Pass from hence and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see thy works which thou dost; for there is no man that doth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, manifest thyself to the world." A corner in Galilee is not the proper theatre for one who calls himself the Messiah. If He is sure of His power and of His mission, why address Himself longer to these poor people who are incapable of appreciating Him? The place where He must manifest Himself is Jerusalem. There learned men may hear Him and judge of Him; there the Temple is, the House of God and of the people wherein the new Kingdom ought to be inaugurated; there are proselytes whose faith is long standing, and who deserve an authentic confirmation of their nascent faith; there innumerable pilgrims shall be found, and to show Himself there will be to manifest Himself to the whole world. On the other hand, to delay longer in these obscure surroundings will give the impression that He fears the light, and that all these works, apparently astonishing, cannot bear a serious examination.

[3] During this festival there were sacrificed seventy calves for an expiation, it is said, of the sins of the seventy nations of the earth. This immolation began with thirteen on the first day, which number gradually decreased by one each day. The close brought the offering of one bull and seven lambs.

Such was the language which the brothers of Jesus uttered naturally and unaffectedly and which St. John has courageously preserved for us. These brethren of Jesus were Joseph and Simon, with their sisters and their brothers-in-law, but not James and Jude, who belong to the Apostolic college. As the Evangelists say, they had not yet acquired that exact conception of their kinsman which true believers ought to have. They suspected, of course, that He was an extraordinary Being, for they could not be indifferent to what they saw and heard; but a solemn demonstration of His real character seemed to them desirable and alone capable of putting an end to all uncertainty.

All these considerations, which, perhaps, might have influenced a mere man, failed to move the Son of God. He did not fear the light, as we shall see; but, knowing the hour of Providence, He did not intend to anticipate it. His Messianic work was not finished, and He could not think of shortening its development. He had scattered, indeed, strong germs of life and of truth in certain souls; He had brought together a nucleus of believers, greatly diminished of late, but henceforth constant and enduring; He had fortified His disciples under the blasts of persecution; He had enlightened them as to the future; He had dispelled all the illusions of their carnal hearts; but, were He to disappear on the morrow, what would be the lot of this young and frail organisation? A few days more of patient teaching will not be too much for the completion of a religious formation so vigorously outlined, but so evidently incomplete. Were He, on the other hand, to follow the caravans to Jerusalem, and arrive there with noisy display, the object of an ovation, would He not provoke the fury of the Pharisees, give them time to plot His ruin, in a word precipitate on the following day the crime which is not to be consummated for six months yet to come?

The Son of Man must die on the Feast of the Passover, not during the solemnity of Tabernacles. All this was written long ago. Jesus reads it in the prophecies and in the divine light that floods His soul. Besides, He has no wish boisterously to be proclaimed a king; He will have no triumph won by surprise, or, as we would say to-day, by political strategy. He will achieve His work with patience, He will go on spreading the light here and there, doing good, quietly gaining over a few souls, and then He will die.

When the time is come, Jesus will be seen going up to Jerusalem, and nothing will be able to check Him in His supreme resolution. It is not that courage is wanting in the Martyr, nor generosity in the Victim. For the time being He calmly pursues His victorious career by ways that men cannot understand, because they are the ways of God. This is why He responds: "My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready." Their situations are quite different. He has His mission, His fame, His views; they are actuated only by curiosity, by the desire to satisfy their longings, and a readiness arising from an absence of danger to themselves. He is the sign of contradiction destined to arise in the midst of the multitude; they are unknown pilgrims; He is the voice that accuses and is detested; they are accepted allies or unnoticed non-partisans. "The world," He says, "cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up (now)[4] to this festival day,

[4] Of all the several ways of interpreting the Master's words in a sense exclusive of all shiftiness or mental restriction not in keeping with the simplicity of His character, this has seemed to us the best. The adverb *now*, which seems to be inserted into the text, is implied in the verb in the present indicative. Many interpreters make Jesus say: "I go not up to this feast *to take part in it*" (*pour la solenniser*); because He intended to arrive only at the close of the celebration and in secret.

because My time is not accomplished." He does not say that He will not appear there at all, but simply that He will not go there with His relatives. This is plain from His affirmation, which is in the present tense: "I go not up."

The sense of these words would have been quite different had He employed the future tense. Besides, whatever was vague or even obscure in His reply, as a result of the form He used, was intentional. Inasmuch as He did not wish to arrive on the first day of the feast in order not to give His enemies time to hatch a plot against Him, He could not, for this same reason, positively intimate that He would come before the end of the festival.

His family, therefore, departed, and He remained in Galilee. His plan was, by following them a few days later, to let the impression spread that He was not in the Holy City, and then arrive when He was no longer looked for. Appearing unexpectedly in the midst of the religious enthusiasm, He will inflict swift blows upon His enemies, and will disappear before they are able to contrive any serious scheme against Him.

Thus, according to His wise foresight, He will arrive soon enough to manifest Himself to the multitude and late enough to escape the malice of His enemies.

BOOK III

Period of Combat in Judea

Section I

First Conflict on the Feast of Tabernacles

CHAPTER I

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF JESUS DURING THE FESTIVAL

The Various Opinions of the Multitude with Regard to Jesus, Whom They Would Like to See — His Sudden Appearance in the Temple—He Presents His Apology for His Teaching and His Conduct—Categorical Declarations Regarding His Origin—The Higher Authorities Cause Him to Be Watched—The Solemn Warning and Threat Which He Addressed to His Enemies. (St. John vii, 11–36.)

As a matter of fact, Jesus turned His steps toward Jerusalem shortly after the departure of the caravans. His journey was made without commotion. He took with Him perhaps only a few of His disciples,[1] not wishing to be noticed on the way. He went as if in disguise

[1] *St. John* ix, 2.

through the various places He passed.[2] In the meantime Jerusalem was given up to the joys of the festival. The spectacle of the metropolis transformed into a camp of fervent pilgrims, the memories of the divine protection in the desert—renewed in the ceremonies of the Temple—the glad canticles, the public processions in which each one carried sacred palm-branches, the feasts themselves in which all were united in common aspirations toward a better future, all contributed to exalt the mind and to reawaken the ancient hopes of the people of God.

Jesus' name had naturally been heralded by those who had witnessed His works and heard His declarations. His friends repeated His name with enthusiasm; His enemies attacked it with fury; strangers desired to know Him. Hence the great excitement remarked by the Evangelist: "The Jews,[3] therefore, sought Him on the festival day and said: Where is He?" He refers here to the hostile portion of the people who, grouped behind their leaders, betrayed by their very impatience the perversity of their intentions.[4] As for the pilgrims, they were much less unanimous in looking upon Jesus with an unfavourable eye. Their thoughts of Him were various. Some said: "He is a good man." And others said: "No, but He seduceth the people." Between these two extremes there was a multitude wavering, undecided, not daring to pronounce

[2] *St. John* vii, 10.

[3] It has been observed with good reason that St. John has distinguished between the *Jews* and the *multitude*. For him the Jews are the nation which follows the influence of its chiefs and is personified in them. They always act in a spirit hostile to Jesus (verses 11 and 13, etc.). The multitude, or the people, represents a whole made up of individuals with different sentiments, malevolent or favourable (verse 12, etc.). These are people from all parts, and the Evangelist distinguishes them from the inhabitants of Jerusalem (verse 25).

[4] The term used to designate Jesus Christ, ἐκεῖνος, manifests the hostility of those who speak.

either way, so long as the supreme authority had not yet passed judgment.

Suddenly, when the festival was at its height, the much-discussed Jesus appeared in the Temple, and began publicly to teach.[5] He surprised first of all the Jews, just as once before He had astonished His compatriots in Nazareth, by the sublimity of His doctrine. "How," cried they in amazement, "doth this man know the Sacred Scripture having never learned?" [6] They knew the condition of His family, the occupation of His boyhood and youth, and they could not understand how He, never having been a disciple, had become a teacher, expounding the Sacred Text with the aid of happy comparisons, venturing to speak in public, and achieving a great success. They knew not that there is a Master Whose eloquence is quite different from that of the Rabbis for the formation of disciples: namely, God the Father; and there is an authorised teaching more sublime than that of the Synagogue: namely, that of Heaven. "My doctrine," answered Jesus, "is not mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." In fact, the true way to prove the divine origin of the Gospel is by desiring to do what God demands of us. This desire is nothing else than the sincere love of good in general, the observance of the moral law set forth by conscience and revelation. To be good through the inclination of the heart facilitates the working of the intelligence; to be evil, on the contrary, multiplies the mists that rise from

[5] It was probably on the Sabbath-day, falling within the octave of the feast, that He made His sudden appearance. The theme of His discourse seems to indicate this. Excepting the first and the last day, the intervening Sabbath-day was the most solemn of the whole octave.

[6] The expression *μεμαθηκώς* must be taken in an absolute sense, and it demonstrates once more that Jesus had never frequented any school.

the heart to the mind and darken the understanding; for, as Pascal has so happily said, "If in order to love human things we must know them, in order to know divine things we must begin by loving them, and we reach the truth only by the way of charity." The Jews, therefore, have only to desire good—to do it is, perhaps, beyond their strength—and naturally they will seek the Gospel which is the meeting-place of all men of goodwill. The honest-minded man who is seeking his ideal, will find it so complete in the words of Jesus, that he will be forced at once to acknowledge the divine origin of these words. He alone can have created a doctrine so marvellously adapted to man's aspirations, Who Himself created man's heart. The happiness, the peace, the satisfaction experienced by the soul that practises the lessons of the Gospel furnish at once the most eloquent demonstration both of the origin of this same Gospel and of its divine authority.

In addition to this, we can, according to Jesus, reach the same demonstration by a more direct way: "He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory," says Jesus; "but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him." It is easy to analyse the teaching of the Gospel. Does the Master speak for His own interest or for the glory of His Father? It is evidently for the glory of His Father, it is for Him that He labours; it is His cause that He defends. Therefore He is come for God; therefore He is God's messenger; therefore His words are the words of Him Who sends Him, and His work consists not in deceiving the multitudes, but in bringing them back to God by the fulfilment of duty. Hence He can protest against all accusations of jealousy, and declare that His discourses are worthy of faith and His work free from injustice. He does not assume for Himself the honour that is due to God.

It is different with the princes of the hierarchical party, who spend their lives in seeking the consideration of the multitude by flattering its evil passions.[7] God's glory is not their chief thought. They wish above all to glorify themselves, and for that purpose they work iniquity and falsehood. "Did not Moses give you the law," said Jesus, challenging His enemies, "and yet none of you keepeth the law?" In fact, they suppress it whenever it checks their passions. In vain does it forbid homicide in any form, for these pious Israelites are even now preparing some one's death. More than this, the murder they are meditating will bear the character of an awful sacrilege; for Moses has not only written: "Thou shalt not kill," but he has also given us the words of Jehovah announcing the Prophet of the future Who is to be the great Law-giver of His people: "And he that will not hear His words, which He shall speak in My name, I will be the avenger." [8] But the princes of the people mean not only to close the Heavenly Envoy's lips, but even to do away with Himself by assassination. "Why," cries out the Master energetically, "why seek you to kill Me?" Is that obedience to the law of Moses? They know well how to quote that law when they wish to accuse Jesus of having violated the Sabbath, and these who now scorn its gravest prescriptions will defend it with energy when there is question of secondary precepts which a reason of a higher order can always annul: "Thou hast a devil; who seeketh to kill Thee?" exclaimed some who heard Him, in ignorance of the situation or through hypocrisy.[9] Overlooking this

[7] *St. John* v, 44, and xii, 42.

[8] *Deut.* xviii, 19.

[9] Certain exegetes put this interruption as coming from the lips of Jesus' followers, who are unaware of the plot against His life. It is more probable that it came from the very ones whom Jesus was unmasking and whose fury knew no bounds. We shall soon see that the designs of these persons were a secret to no one (v. 25); and, besides, this question is so insulting that it

insulting interruption, Jesus recalls the incident that had marked His last visit to Jerusalem and the serious threats of which He had been the object because He had cured the paralytic. "One work I have done," says Jesus, "and you all wonder."[10] It was modest to speak thus of a great miracle and to liken it to servile work, careless of the supernatural character which might render it a decisive argument in the discussion. But He thinks it useless to employ all His arms to confound His adversaries.

"Therefore Moses gave you circumcision," He continues, "(not because it is of Moses,[11] but of the fathers;) and on the Sabbath-day you circumcise a man." As the law-giver directed that the child should be circumcised on the eighth day after birth, there was a conflict between two different laws when this day coincided with the Sabbath. But in this case, no Jew hesitated to sacrifice the Sabbath in favour of the circumcision, for the reason that the Sabbath is for man and not man for the Sabbath. Then the Master concludes: "If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry at Me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath-day?" The argument was wholly conclusive, for in circumcision there was a material

would be out of place on the lips of Jesus' followers. His enemies accuse Him of having a devil: δαιμόνιον ἔχεις, which is equivalent to being a fool. (*St. John* x, 20, and *St. Matt.* iv, 24.)

[10] The verb θαυμάζω signifies here the mingled astonishment and irritation caused by a flagrant violation of the law. The explanation of this is seen in the words that follow later: ἐμοὶ χολᾶτε, "are you angry at Me?"

[11] It may be that this parenthesis is the Evangelist's. However, it is more commonly admitted that it is Jesus', and that the Master is careful to prevent any accusation of inexactitude after the assertion concerning His knowledge made shortly before. He observes therefore that the prescription as to the circumcision of male children is falsely attributed to Moses. It dates from Abraham. (*Gen.* xvii, 10; xxi, 4.) Moses, writing the history of the people of God, notes its institution. That, no doubt, is why it may have been said to come from him. In reality, he simply mentions it as a tradition to be preserved. (*Levit.* xii, 3.)

work, requiring preparation and special care, whereas in the cure with which they found fault, an act of the will had sufficed; the transgression of the Sabbath in order to circumcise was a very ordinary thing, and the same for the sake of healing a sick man was merely an exception. In the first case, it was a matter simply of the consecration of a man to God; in the second, Jesus had healed the entire man, in soul as well as in body;[12] finally, circumcision was merely a ceremony dating back to Abraham, while charity was the natural law itself, inscribed by God in the heart of the first man and of his posterity. The hypocritical malice of the Pharisees is, therefore, evident. Jesus is content simply to add in all gentleness: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment." This was equivalent to saying that works are to be judged less with the eyes of the body than with those of the soul. To do otherwise is, in the study of the law, to accept the letter and neglect the spirit.

This sound logic silenced adversaries who could do nothing except through falsehood, malevolent insinuations, and secret plottings. Since, therefore, no one arose to contradict Him, Jesus remained master of the field. Some, however—they were people of Jerusalem, better informed of the plans of the hierarchical party than the others—were astonished that He should be suffered to have the final word in a public discussion and be allowed to triumph with so much honour. "Is not this," said they, "He Whom they seek to kill? And behold He speaketh openly, and they say nothing to Him. Have the rulers known for a truth that this is the Christ? But we know this man whence He is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is." Although the teachers of Israel could not ignore

[12] The miraculous cure with which they reproach Jesus, had effected a remission of sins.

the origin of the Messiah, since they clearly read in their books that He would come forth from Bethlehem and from the race of David,[13] the people were less enlightened. They looked for a Messiah who would come unexpectedly, like a man fallen from heaven whose generation would be unknown, and whose triumph would be as swift as lightning. These ideas, or better, these assumptions were born of the confusion produced in the minds of the multitude by the twofold nature, human and divine, of the Heavenly Envoy. They were pleased to retain these vague beliefs with their special character of the wonderful and mysterious, instead of correcting them by an attentive study of the texts,[14] which would restore the truth in its own light. It is quite true that the Christ would advance upon the clouds of heaven, that His reign had begun in eternity, that His generation was unspeakable, but all this was said of His divine nature, while the prophecies concerning His family, His place of birth, His time, were spoken of His human nature.

Ever ready to make use even of the difficulties opposed to Him, in order to triumph, Jesus takes up the objection, acknowledges its worth, and immediately derives from it an argument to prove His character as Messiah. It is true, the origin of the Messiah must remain a mystery to His contemporaries, but is not the origin of Jesus Himself a mystery? "You both know Me," He said, raising His voice in the Temple in order to be heard by His adversaries, "and you know whence I am,[15] and therefore

[13] See *St. John* vii, 42, and *St. Matt.* ii, 5, 6.

[14] *Isa.* liii, 8; *Mich.* v, 2.

[15] The text preserved by St. John is so concise that we feel obliged to develop it in order to render it intelligible, notwithstanding our custom of adding nothing to the words of Our Lord. The following are the exact words: "You know whence I am, and I am not come from Myself; but He that sent Me is true, Whom you know not. I know Him, because I am from Him and He hath sent Me." The Evangelist observes that in pronouncing

you refuse to recognise Me as the Messiah. But you know naught of Me, but that which concerns My human nature; there is another part that escapes you and in which I fulfil the condition required of the Messiah; in this part you know not whence I am. I am not come of Myself; the truth is that some one has sent Me and Him you know not.[16] Cease, therefore, denying Me this characteristic mark of being unknown which the Messiah must bear, and, in keeping with your own ideas, admit the legitimacy of My mission." There is a yet more intimate and, so to speak, more categorical mark of His superior nature: namely, that although no one knows that real Being Who delegates the Messiah, He knows Him, both because He shares in His essence, having proceeded as the Word from His bosom,[17] and because, as man, He has been in communion with Him in receiving His mission: "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He hath sent Me."

This response, so clear, so peremptory, could not but have the twofold result of exasperating His declared enemies and of arousing faith in undecided souls. For immediately we see the crowd separate into two distinct groups. Some desire to lay hold on Jesus and close His lips by violence; others say among themselves: "When the Christ cometh, shall He do more miracles than these which this man doth?" The enthusiasm of the latter renders powerless the hatred of the former, and they dare not attempt what they desire; because, as the Evangelist says, Jesus' hour was not yet come.

these words Jesus cried out ἔκραζεν, and that He was in the Temple, that is, right before the eyes of His enemies.

[16] There is something like harshness in telling the Jews, who regard themselves as the only adorers of the true God, that they do not know this God. Jesus here considers God, as the Father, in relation with His Son, Whom He begets from all eternity, and Whom He sends in time. As the God of deism, the Jews know Him; as the God of the Trinity, He is altogether beyond them, since they do not recognise the Son, Who has come to them.

[17] *St. John* i, 2, 18; vi, 46, 62.

However, exasperated by the popular movement in favour of the young Prophet, and unwilling longer to listen to His praises, the Pharisees, acting in concert with the chief-priests, obtained a squad of police officials who were to keep watch on Him and seize Him at the first favourable opportunity, however slight. For He might, at any moment, furnish a chance for judicial action by a few seditious words, and, even in the midst of His vehement attacks, compromise His popularity, and find Himself deserted by all.

Jesus soon became aware of this hostile surveillance, and was distressed by it. The police ready to lay their hands upon His shoulder and to arrest Him, the audacity of His enemies in daring to undertake such forceful measures against His person, the isolation of which He was still conscious in the midst of multitudes, all united in an endeavour to disconcert His courage. With an accent of sadness capable of recalling those honest hearts that still hesitated, He exclaimed: "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me." These, then, were the last days of divine mercy. After having seen the miracles, heard the discourses, received the grace of the Saviour, there was nothing more to do but to hasten and join themselves to Him by faith. A few months more and it will be too late; He shall have been removed by the enemy. "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I go, thither ye cannot come."

This threat was to have a most terrible fulfilment. For, some time after this, Jesus was taken from the midst of His people, and those who had not believed in Him when alive, have sought Him since and seek Him still, but find Him not. This unfortunate Jewish people calls in vain with most touching supplications for the Deliverer foretold by the prophets; the Deliverer comes not. Israel, look-

ing to the future for Him Who has already come, cannot meet Him on the way. Israel shall therefore die without a Saviour in time and without hope for eternity. They alone enter the Kingdom of Heaven who have joined themselves by faith to its true Founder and Chief, Jesus of Nazareth.

These words of the Master were beyond the understanding of His hearers; and they began to say ironically: "Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? Will He go unto the dispersed [18] Greeks, and teach the Gentiles? What is this saying that He hath said: Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, ye cannot come?"

In the eyes of the Jews what could be more extravagant and more ridiculous than that the Messiah should preach to the Gentiles and establish among them the kingdom which He could not found in Israel? They therefore laugh sarcastically at the pretensions which their ignorance attributes to Jesus. Not comprehending these words, they treat them with derision. But their insolent mockery shall be none the less the story of the future. The Messiah, borne on the Apostles' lips, shall soon go to the nations of the earth to establish Himself among them. St. John, who wrote among the Greeks, took pleasure in inscribing in his Gospel these jests of the Jews, to show how God can, when He will, without departing from the ways of His wisdom, punish the sarcasm of the impious by insuring its most terrible realisation.

[18] Some authors have understood these words, *τὴν διασποράν τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, to mean the Jews living outside of Palestine; in this they wrongly rely on the *First Epistle* of St. Peter i, 1, and on that of St. James i, 1. For, in that sense, the Evangelist would have to use the term *Ἑλληνισταί*. *Ἕλληνες* is here put in opposition with the Jews, and means the Greeks or the Gentiles. We should, therefore, take this as meaning the Greeks dispersed throughout the world, that is to say, the nations that speak the Greek language, civilised peoples. (See *Acts* xiv, 1 *et passim*; *Rom.* xi, 16 *et passim*.)

CHAPTER II

THE SOLEMN DECLARATION ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL

The Day That Came After the Seventh—The Solemn Libation—The Various Meanings of This Ceremony—Its Prophetic Signification—Jesus' Solemn Declaration: He Is the True Source of Living Water — The Impressions of the Multitude as They Heard Him—They Dare Not Lay Hands on Him — The Conference of the Sanhedrim After the Return of the Emissaries—Nicodemus' Plea. (St. John vii, 37–52.)

Ordinarily the Feast of Tabernacles lasted only seven days. The prescriptions of Moses were explicit on this point.[1] But to this sacred week was added, either as a commemoration of the entrance into the promised land, or as a conclusion of all the feasts of the year, an eighth day which Moses had directed to be solemnised without clearly declaring its mystical sense.[2] This additional Feast of the *Azareth*, which was celebrated by an absolute rest and a general reunion in the Temple, was so well accepted as a necessary appendix to that of the Tabernacles, that in ordinary conversation they were never sepa-

[1] *Deut.* xvi, 13; *Numb.* xxix, 12.
[2] *Numb.* xxix, 35; *Levit.* xxiii, 36; *II Esdras* viii, 18.

rated,[3] and to the solemnity was devoted a space of eight days. The eighth day,[4] called by Philo the "most holy conclusion of the year," and by the Rabbis "the last and good day," is the same that is designated by St. John as the last and the greatest of all. It was probably one of the days on which the following events occurred.

On each one of these eight days, as is said in a passage of the Talmud,[5] a symbolical libation was poured out. As there was no spring of living water within the Temple, recourse was had, after the sacrifice of the morning, to the fountain of Siloe, which flowed at the foot of the holy mountain. There a priest filled a golden urn with fresh, clear water, and bore it solemnly into the Temple through the entrance called the Gate of the Waters, amid the peal of trumpets and universal joy. On reaching the altar of the holocausts, he halted, and, at the cry of the multitude about him "Lift up thy hand," he mingled the water in the golden urn with wine in a silver cup, and thus poured out the libations, while the public joy and gratitude were proclaimed in the enthusiastic chanting of the great *Hallel*.[6]

These special rites, which are not found in the legislation of Moses, but which the Rabbis mention with their

[3] Josephus, *Antiq.*, iii, 10: Ἐφ' ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ ἑορτὴν ἄγοντας, κ. τ. λ. Then he adds: "On the eighth day they lay absolutely all work aside. It is the custom among the Hebrews to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in this way." (*II Macc.* x, 6.)

[4] On this hypothesis Jesus continued, on the following days and beyond the festival time, the application which He made of certain symbols used in the celebration, as, for instance, the lighted candelabra, to His rôle as Messiah. If we wish to accept the day named by St. John (vii, 37) as only the seventh day, which may be considered a great day, although not the most solemn, the discourse on the light of the world was pronounced on the eighth day, the Feast of the *Azareth*.

[5] In treatise *Succah*, c. 4, § 9, R. Jehuda says: "Libant unum logum omnibus octo diebus et libanti dicunt: Eleva manum tuam."

[6] *Ps.* cxiii, cxviii.

minutest details,[7] had been introduced in the times of the prophets, or perhaps only after the return from the captivity, together with the other innovations of the Pharisees. Are we to take these libations of the seven days to be a mystical commemoration of the waters that had refreshed the people in the desert, and those of the eighth day to be a thanksgiving for the springs in which the promised land abounded? Or was this mingling of wine with water nothing else than a solemn thanksgiving for the rains and harvests of the year?[8] The branches laden with fruit which were borne in procession would seem to favour this latter explanation. But we must look higher for the real sense of these pious symbols. The Rabbis themselves tell us that in them there was more thought of the future than of the past, and in their opinion all these ceremonies were less a thanksgiving than a prayer. In fact, on this occasion the people chanted with a lively faith the prophecy of Isaias: "Thou shalt draw waters in the fountains of the Saviour." The Messianic times had always appeared to them under the emblem of vivifying waters that were to flow over the earth. Like flowing waters that come to the thirsty, or like rivers that spread over dry lands, so the spirit of God would come upon the race of Jacob.[9] According to Joel[10] waters would run in the rivers of Juda, and an abundant spring would leap from the house of the Lord to water the torrent of Thorns. Finally Zacharias[11] supposed that the heavenly flood would cover the entire world with the most wholesome fertility.

[7] See Wetstein on this passage; also Lightfoot.

[8] Philo, *De Septen. et Festis Extra.*, says: "To these seven days an eighth is added, the name of which declares it to be, as it were, a corollary not only of this festival, as is easily seen, but also of all the feasts of the year. For this solemnity of the eighth day is the last of the year, and is a sort of ending, a fixed and specially consecrated limit, *συμπέρασμα ἁγιώτερον*." The land had then borne all its fruits, and each one, having gathered his crops, blessed the hand of the Creator. [9] *Isa.* xliv, 3. [10] *Joel* iii, 18. [11] *Zach.* xiv, 8.

But now the time was come when all these figures were near to their realisation. In response to the solemn supplication of Israel, which had gone forth resounding on the precedings days, and still re-echoed in the sacred enclosure, Jesus, standing in the midst of the multitude, proclaimed: "If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith,[12] out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." [13] For is not Christ the rock that gives drink to the people dying of thirst in the desert? This new figure of the flowing fountain is realised in Him, as are those of the brazen serpent, the pillar of light, the manna, and the Paschal lamb. Whoever is tortured with the thirst of anxiety, of doubt,

[12] It is a question to what part of the Scriptures Jesus here alludes. Nowhere, in the texts in our possession, has it been possible to discover this quotation with all the ideas it evokes. Some have thought that it was part of a sacred book no longer in existence. Others, with St. Chrysostom, punctuate the passage differently, and translate it: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, in keeping with the Scriptures," etc. More recently some have thought of dividing the passage so as to make the first two words of verse 38 of *St. John* vii the subject of πινέτω in verse 37, and translate it with an inversion: "Let him drink, he that believeth in Me"; thus κοιλίας αὐτοῦ might refer to Jesus. But since the Saviour had already applied to His body the idea of a temple, in speaking thus He might have had in view *Joel* iv, 18; *Zach.* xiv, 8; *Ezech.* xlvii, 1–12. The majority, in despair of finding the different figures united in one single text, prefer to accept this quotation as an allusion either to several passages in Scripture or to only one of the following, which recall the idea of going to drink at a spring, or even that of becoming a spring one's self. These are in *Isa.* lv, 1: "All you that thirst come to the waters"; and that cited above, xliv, 3; and again lviii, 11: "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water, whose waters shall not fail." Likewise the text from Joel cited above, and the detailed description by Ezechiel (xlvii, 1–12). However, the picture of the just man becoming a fountain can scarcely be drawn with justice except from the following passages: "Thy law is in the midst of my heart" (*Ps.* xxxix, 9); "Son of man, thy belly shall eat, and thy bowels shall be filled with this book which I give thee" (*Ezech.* iii, 3).

[13] This figure is not unknown to the Rabbis. *Tanchuma*, fol. 44, 1, says: "Unde Abraham didicit legem? R. Simeon filius Jochai dixit: Bini renes ipsius tanquam binæ lagenæ aquarum factæ sunt ex quibus lex promanavit." And in *Sohar Chadasch*, fol. 44, 4, is found: "Quando homo se convertit ad Dominum tanquam fons vivis aquis impletur, et fluenta ejus egrediuntur ad omnis generis homines et ad omnes tribus."

of sin, has only to drink of the living waters that the Saviour holds out to him. He shall at once be satiated, and even flooded beyond his need; so much so, that from him shall flow streams capable of satiating yet other souls. For he who has seized upon Jesus Christ by faith, and has brought Him into his heart, at once becomes His Apostle, and propagates His name, His doctrine, His grace. The disciples will be a living proof of this later on. It was to this, according to the Evangelist, that Jesus alluded here. "Now," adds St. John, "this He said of the Spirit which they would receive who believed in Him, for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." [14]

This discourse of Jesus, of which the Evangelist gives us

[14] It is not difficult to grasp the connection of ideas by which the Evangelist perceives in the figure employed by Jesus the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Water, in Scripture, is an emblem of moral regeneration, absolution, and salvation. Isaias goes so far as to establish a complete parallelism between water and the Spirit. According to him God announces the effusion of the Spirit, in promising, as a figure, the effusion of the water. (*Isa.* xliv, 3.) St. John's explanation of Jesus' thought and allusion was, therefore, wholly in Isaias. But how can the Evangelist say that the Spirit *was not yet?* This strange assertion, which seems to have troubled the copyists—some having added, others having omitted, certain words in the text in order to soften its crudeness—presents, however, no serious difficulty to Christian theology. The Holy Spirit with the Word and the Father has His being from all eternity in an unchanging Trinity of divine Persons. Still, as far as man is concerned, the activity of these Persons may be said to manifest itself in successive phases. Thus, as the Word has not ceased to act in the world as its light and its beauty, so, too, the Spirit has at all times strengthened the souls of the just. It was He Whom David received into his heart (*I Kings* xvi, 13), and Whom he begged God not to take from him (*Ps.* li). It is He Whom Israel has always possessed (*Isa.* lxiii, 2), and of Whom it has been proud as its most glorious prerogative. It is He, in fine, according to the Apostles' teachings (*Acts* xxviii, 25; *II Peter* i, 21), Who, with His breath, inspired the prophets of the Old Testament. But, as the Word was pleased to fulfil in the Incarnation the great manifestation of His Personality, which was to overshadow all His various manifestations in other creatures, so the Spirit reserved until Pentecost an effusion sufficiently universal and powerful to eclipse all His individual or secret communications in past times. In this sense God had said by the prophet (*Isa.* lxv, 17): "Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth; the former things shall not be in remembrance and they shall not come upon the heart." But the Holy Ghost can come

here only a general idea,[15] agitated the multitude and divided it into two well-defined factions, friends and enemies. Of the first, some said: "This is the prophet indeed"; and by this they meant some one of those valiant defenders of the rights of God under the Old Law, who was to come back to earth to glorify Him during the days of the Messiah. Others, more enthusiastic and farther advanced toward faith, exclaimed: "This is the Christ!" As for His enemies, they sought for objections—and malevolence can always find them—"Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the Scripture say that Christ cometh out of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the town where David was?" Elsewhere we have seen how these prophetical indications had had their complete fulfilment at the birth of Jesus. The multitude, only vaguely acquainted with the past of Him Whom they pretended to judge, were ignorant of the fact that the enrolment had been precisely the occasion of His being born at Bethlehem. Seeing Him come forth out of Galilee, they deemed themselves right in denying, according to the prophecy of Micheas,[16] the Messianic character of His origin. In reality, in order to avoid all error in the interpretation of this prophecy, its precise meaning should have been de-

with the abundance of His gifts only into souls purified from all stain; the Old Testament taught this (*Ps.* li; *Jeremias* xxxi, 21; *Isa.* lix, 2), and this is why His outpouring cannot take place until after the glorification of Jesus Christ, that is, after the complete restoration of mankind. This restoration, inaugurated in the expiation on Calvary, was completed in the final triumph of Ascension Day. That is the reason why in His words and in His actions Jesus has always made the coming of the Holy Ghost subsequent to the consummation of His work. (*St. John* xvi, 7 *et passim*, 20, 22; *Acts* ii, 33.) The Spirit *shall be*, shall reign in the world when the Son shall have been glorified.

[15] The plural *τῶν λόγων τούτων*, which is found in the best manuscripts, indicates a development of the discourse which, indeed, is supposed on account of the agitation of the people. One or two phrases would not have sufficed to draw from the multitude the professions of faith that follow. St. John simply gives the general idea which the Master had taken pains to develop.

[16] *Mich.* v, 1.

termined by another prediction from Isaias [17] indicating Galilee as the point where the great manifestation of the Messiah should begin. But the prejudice that moves them to seek for objections in Scripture, also prevents them from finding there the texts that should solve them. These difficulties, to which the Evangelist pays no attention, since he judges them to be of too little value, appeared to be decisive for many among the Jews. They provoked violent disputes and accentuated the divisions among those present.

It was because of this growing agitation that the thought of arresting Jesus recurred. But from the idea to the execution was yet a far cry. Whether it was that God directly protected His Son, or that the enthusiasm of His friends seemed a serious danger to His enemies and made them circumspect, no one ventured to lay hands on the Master in order to take possession of His august person. More than this, the officers of the police departed filled with admiration for Him Whom they had closely followed, and deeply moved by the discourses they had heard.

When the chief-priests and Pharisees saw them returning alone, they exclaimed in anger: "Why have you not brought Him?" But they could only avow the surprise and the respect with which His powerful words had inspired them: "Never did man speak like this man," said they. This reply not only wounded the pride of the Sanhedrim, it also proved their injustice. According to the very avowal of these officers, that is to say, of servants ever ready to flatter their masters, not one of the doctors of the Synagogue approached the authority of Jesus. The young Prophet displayed an eloquence with which no other was comparable. The officers declared so sincerely, and

[17] *Isa.* ix, 1.

the chief-priests were vexed thereby. "Are you also seduced?" they exclaimed in their anger. "Hath any one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him? But this multitude that knoweth not the law, are accursed." We can easily discern in these words, together with their senseless arrogance, the Pharisaical sect which Jesus has so often stigmatised, but never converted. Their nature is here plainly evidenced. Exaggerated esteem of self, contempt of others, presumption, sophistry, brutality; nothing is lacking. There is also something ridiculous about it, for these men who so proudly talk of their collective and unanimous resistance to Jesus' teaching, seem to ignore the fact that Jesus counts at least one follower among them. They pretend that the ignorant only can be seduced, and yet Nicodemus, doctor of Israel, as Jesus once had named him, was long ago won over to the ideas of the Prophet of Nazareth. Must he, too, be likened to the vile populace? Is he not a member of the Grand Council? Moreover, without entirely ridding himself of that timidity which we have seen in him, but with an affected and somewhat malicious indifference, Nicodemus at once arises to take Jesus' part. In the name of the law, which they boast that they know so well, and which nevertheless they observe so little, he demands a more complete investigation of the case. "Doth our law judge any man," he says, "unless it first hear him, and know what he doeth?"

Pretending to be free from all partisanship, Nicodemus simply stood as one without bias among these passionate judges. But the very fact that he does not share the fanaticism of these furious men is sufficient to declare him their enemy; by not sharing in their moral exaltation, he draws upon himself their anger and their insults.

It was not in vain that he would have recalled these

pretentious legalists to an observance of the elements of justice. "Art thou also a Galilean?" they said to him eagerly; "search out the Scripture, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not." This was not logic, it was invective. For not joining in their unjust wrath, Nicodemus beheld himself insulted; they asked if he was a Galilean, and this fine argument ended with the assertion that inasmuch as Galilee had never hitherto had any prophet, it was incredible that it should begin by producing one now. The legitimacy of the antecedent clause might be contested, for it is probable that several of the prophets had been Galileans,[18] but, in any case, the conclusion was absurd, as the past was not necessarily to be the rule of the future. Such is the sophistry by which passion leads human reason from truth to error.

As a matter of fact, all knew that the Messiah did not confine His action to Galilee. The centre of the religious life of Judaism was in Jerusalem, and there, according to Scripture and reason, should occur the final and decisive manifestation. But to deny that the Messiah could begin His labours in Galilee was to misunderstand the celebrated oracle of Isaias, which described the first light of the Gospel as coming forth from the green mountains of that province. Finally, to be ignorant of the fact that Jesus was really born in Judea denoted that they had neglected to seek the truth concerning His origin. In the presence of such partisanship and ignorance, discussion was superfluous and impossible. It does not appear that it was

[18] There are, in fact, three prophets who are thought by many to be natives of Galilee. As regards Jonas, who was of Gathepher (*IV Kings* xiv, 25), this is certain. As for Nahum, it must be ascertained whether he is really of the village of Elkoschi, as St. Jerome supposes, or of the race of Koschi, as the Rabbis teach, and whether or not Koschi is really the name of a Galilean village, as St. Jerome alone asserts. As for Osee, it is still more doubtful. Elias, according to the testimony found in *III Kings* xvii, 1, and in *Tobias* i, 2, was of Galaad, and not a Galilean.

further prolonged. The Evangelist merely says that every man returned to his own house, the few followers of Jesus congratulating themselves perhaps on their timid courage, and His enemies stirring themselves up to a plan of action to be better prepared and more energetically carried out.

CHAPTER III

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

The Pharisees Ask that Jesus Act as Judge in the Case of a Woman Taken in Adultery—The Twofold Danger Which They Seek to Create—Jesus Remains Silent and Writes Upon the Ground—What He Wrote — The Words He Addresses to the Accusers Transfer the Question from Juridical to Moral Grounds — He Sustains the Law, but Suppresses the Accusers—The Sinner Is Forgiven. (St. John vii, 53–viii, 11.)

Jesus, Who had turned away in the direction of the Mount of Olives, to pass the night there beneath some leafy shelter, in the midst of His pilgrim friends, reappeared the next morning at daybreak in the Temple. The multitude again surrounded Him with evident eagerness. Seating Himself, He was beginning to instruct them, when a most unexpected incident furnished His enemies with an opportunity of setting a snare to entrap Him. In the midst of those boisterous celebrations (which Plutarch calls the bacchanalia of the Jews), among the foreigners who had come from all parts to share in this unusual life of freedom and of joy that was often worldly, an unfortunate woman fell disgracefully. Taken in the very act of adultery, she was brought before Jesus with the emotion of her guilt fresh upon her and covered with shame.

Certain Pharisees and Scribes had assumed charge of the affair. Their manner of procedure leads us to believe that they were of the famous sect of *Zealots*.

They dragged the criminal into the midst of the assembly, saying: "Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now, Moses in the law commanded us to stone [1] such an one. But what sayest Thou?" Thus, notwithstanding their irritation against Jesus, they made Him judge. In reality, this was the more surely to destroy Him, for according to His response they hoped to be able to compromise Him and to arouse against Him universal indignation. Hatred, as it approaches its object, frequently fawns and flatters in order the better to wreak its vengeance. We know that the Pharisees had often tried to set Jesus in opposition to Moses. Thoroughly confounded by His application of the law of the Sabbath, they eagerly seized the opportunity of trying Him on another delicate point, the important question of adultery.

They supposed that, with His daring views, the new Reformer would maintain the theories of indulgence and mercy even for such a crime as this. Was He not the avowed friend of publicans and sinners? And if, now,

[1] In *Levit.* xx, 10, and *Deut.* xxii, 22, an adulteress is simply condemned to death; and it seems, according to the *Talmud*, that when the manner of death is not specified, strangulation is understood. (*Mischna, Tract. Sanhedrin*, fol. 5, 2.) Therefore, there would be here an ignorance of the law or of Jewish customs which would contribute to make doubtful the genuineness of this fragment, which is considered spurious even from other points of view. But would not this be giving too great authority to the *Mischna*, especially when we see in *Ezech.* xvi, 38–40, that adulterers were to be stoned? Even Moses, when not fixing the penalty of stoning to death for certain crimes, does not exclude it. (See, e. g., on the violation of the Sabbath: *Exod.* xxxi, 14; xxx, 11; compare with *Numb.* xv, 32, 35.) In addition to these reasons, which appear to be decisive in disproving a very general text of the *Mischna*, we can always suppose that the adulteress accused before Jesus was not a wife, but a faithless affianced woman, and in that case, according to Moses himself (*Deut.* xxii, 23–24), she should positively be stoned.

His tolerance should go so far, it would be easy to unmask His ideas, as being subversive of morality as well as of religion, and to rouse public opinion against Him. If, what seemed impossible, He were to take His stand by the side of the law, if He were to pronounce the application of the penalty decreed by Moses, He would deny His whole past, renounce His beautiful maxims concerning clemency, break with all the unfortunates who were flattering themselves that they had a place in His Kingdom, and, above all, render Himself responsible before the Sanhedrim and the authority of Rome, for the consequences of a sentence of death. For they were ready to inflict at once the penalty decreed by Moses should Jesus declare her worthy of it. Following the example of Phineas,[2] whose spirit they sought to revive, the Zealots, in their indignation against crime, anticipated the judges' regular sentence, and proudly arrogated to themselves the right of executing the guilty.

Jesus had come on earth to apply not the law of men, but only the law of God. Instead of replying to their question, He simply bent down and with His finger wrote upon the ground.[3] Was it His intention thus to signify His contempt for those who came to tempt Him, and His firm resolution to make no reply? The philosopher of whom Ælianus [4] speaks, had done this; instead of solving the difficulty proposed to him, he had turned round and written on the wall. This, too, the Jewish [5] Rabbis sometimes did when they were unwilling to pronounce judg-

[2] *Numb.* xxv, 6, etc.

[3] In *Jer.* xvii, 13, God writes on the earth the names of those who abandon Him. There is no reason for preserving them, since they themselves must perish. The men who pass by, the storms that rage, are charged with their obliteration. They who have renounced their wish to be inscribed in the Book of Eternity, have their place only in the miserable Book of Time.

[4] *Hist. Var.*, xiv, 19.

[5] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.*, ad h. l.

ment in delicate matters. The persistence of the Pharisees in seeking a reply from Jesus, leads us to believe that they had interpreted His action in this way. In that case, the incoherent signs that the Master was writing expressed nothing else than His clear resolution not to speak. However, it is more probable that, since Jesus made the motion of writing, He had really written.

The harsh, proud attitude of the accusers had stirred up His indignation, and He determined to make their hypocrisy manifest. According to the Roman law, before every judgment the act of accusation had to be presented to the judge together with the names of the accusers. This had not been done in the present instance; but it was in all likelihood the formality that Jesus wished to observe when He bent down to write the first time. The same legislation [6] exacted besides that the citizen who constituted himself accuser before the judge, should himself be at least less guilty than the accused; otherwise he ran the risk of being charged in turn and even judged first of all.

Jesus, having probably begun by making the legal list of the accusers, afterward attentively observes it. They think He is hesitating, and press Him to speak. Then rising up, He exclaims: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Jewish law authorised that the accuser or the witness should be forced to act as executioner. This requirement in the present case was very much like an accusation. But the wicked are clever in assuming a brazen front to pretend that the accusations of honest men do not reach them. The Pharisees stood impassive. Then Jesus stooped down to write again.

[6] Heineccii, *Antiq. Juris Rom.*, lib. iv, tit. 18, §17–20. Cicero (*In Verrum*, 3, at the beginning) alludes to it: "Vis corruptorem aliquem vel adulterum accusare? Providendum diligenter ne in tua vita vestigium libidinis appareat," etc.

According to some manuscripts, He added to the name of each accuser a list of his faults.[7] The ground became as if on fire, and the trial was unendurable. A public disclosure of the most secret sins, under such conditions, was a punishment no man would bear. The first of all those who had accused the wretched woman—they were the ancients of the people—seeing themselves inscribed at the head of the list, unmasked, and justly qualified according to their personal vices, disappeared one by one. The others had no further desire to prolong the experience, and, without delay, all withdrew in succession from the oldest to the youngest, the former in shame for what had been written, the latter in fear of what would be written.

Thus Jesus had preserved the law of Moses with its divine authority, and had succeeded in saving the accused woman. He had judged it enough merely to deny the competence of her judges and the worth of witnesses as guilty as herself.

With admirable skill He had transferred the question from juridical grounds, where the Pharisees had placed it, and where, since He was not an official judge, He did not wish to treat it, to the moral grounds on which He could so easily humiliate and discourage the accusers. When one judges in the name of law and of the office it confers, one need not be a saint in order to attack the vice that is accused by public honesty. But when one constitutes himself judge, he must, at least, be morally superior to the man he judges. Here, neither in the name of the law nor in the name of their personal virtue had the Pharisees any right to pose as accusers, much less as authorised judges.

Through the medium of this shameful flight of the enemy whom a word written on the ground had hurled

[7] The manuscript *U* and others have *ἑνὸς ἑκάστου αὐτῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας.*

back in confusion into the darkness, the multitude was enabled to contemplate the most sublime, the most touching, the most God-like spectacle. Jesus was alone with the adulteress: He towering in all His moral majesty, beautiful in His sanctity, radiant in His mercy; she, shamed, impure, trembling; both victims escaped from the malice of men, and remained finally victors of the field. Jesus was the triumphant and glorious Saviour; the woman was the sheep wounded and defiled by the teeth of savage beasts. Would her new Master enclose her within the fold or cast her out amid the offal? Her brow covered with shame, her eyes cast down, her hands crossed in an attitude of despair, the wretched woman awaited her sentence.

Jesus, Who was ever kind as well as wise, regarded her with compassion, and, seeing that everybody had disappeared, He said: "Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" She replied: "No man, Lord." And Jesus said: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more." Thus He Who alone could possibly be found with the conditions required to strike the guilty in the name of morality, refuses to do it.[8] This is because, although in His sanctity He has a horror of sin, in His goodness He still has love for the sinner. He does not crush the culprit in His anger, He mercifully gives her time to reform. Instead of saying as He did to Magdalen: "Go in peace," He utters simply the word "Go!" to show, no doubt, the distance that separates these two women, one of whom had come of her own accord, moved by repentance, the other led forcibly by the judges; the former full of faith and love, the latter simply humiliated and confused. To Magdalen He granted perfect justification. To the adulteress He gives

[8] This is understood from the "neither will I" (οὐδὲ ἐγώ), on Jesus' lips.

time and means to acquire it by a moral penance, which is the most useful, the sweetest, and most severe of all since it creates the moral obligation of sinning no more. The grandeur of this whole scene proves the authenticity of the narrative.[9]

[9] It is true that several of the Fathers of the Church, and some of the most ancient, have said nothing of this beautiful passage; such are, for example, Origen, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Apollinaris, St. Chrysostom, and others. The reason of this is that it was not in the Gospel of their time. In fact, a great number of manuscripts do not contain it: e. g., the manuscripts ℵ ABLTXΔ (from the fourth to the ninth century), and sixty others. Thirty evangelistaries, Italic, Sahidic, Coptic, Syriac, do not contain it. It must be acknowledged that the Orientals had suppressed it at an early date, and they did so with sufficient daring to cause it to be marked with a sign of doubt in several manuscripts which have retained it (ΕΜΣΔΠ). Others place it at the end of the *Gospel of St. John*, as an Apostolical fragment intentionally detached, the proper place for which seems uncertain. One or two add it to chapter xvi of *St. Luke;* but they probably transferred it to the text, taking it from a marginal note put there for some purpose of concordance. Finally the numerous variants found in every line show that this passage has only with great difficulty withstood the terrible opposition early declared against it. It may have been a dogmatic prejudice that moved certain sectaries in the second century to suppress this sublime fragment in which God's mercy might seem to be exaggerated. The Montanists especially, who introduced an awful rigorism, might have been scandalised and embarrassed by such an instance of Christian clemency. And, as a matter of fact, the environment amid which this sect took its rise and developed, in Phrygia, to wit; the epoch during which it was powerful, the better part, namely, of the second century; the daring of its chiefs, who applied the shears of their interested criticism to the Holy Books themselves—all this was easily in harmony with the act of violence which a great number of Oriental manuscripts seem to have suffered at this same date, and which the copies in the West and in Constantinople alone escaped. It is true that, to be logical, the Montanists or Cataphrygians should have suppressed other passages, too; that of the prodigal son, of the sinful woman at the feet of Jesus, etc.; but error is not always sufficiently consistent or sufficiently daring to follow out all its premises. It is even doubtful whether it may not be said that in any of these instances of divine mercy, the duty of judging only for the sake of forgiving is as clearly set forth as in the story of the adulteress.

Besides this hypothesis, which makes a sect responsible for the suppression of this passage, many have thought that from the beginning the Churches, in obedience to an inspiration of excessive prudence, had deemed it preferable, in the midst of perverted populations, not to lay this story commonly before the multitude, since it might seem rather an encouragement to disorder than a subject of moral edification. This is the explanation given by St. Augustine (*Con. Faustum*, 22, 25; *de Adult., conj.* 2, 6, 7) and by St. Ambrose (*Apol. Davidis Secunda*). But in admitting this supposition, it must still be asked how it happened that this suppression took place in nearly all the manu-

scripts of the East and in scarcely one of the West. It has been said that although the dissolute morals of Asia and Africa were in danger of being justified, pardon being thus easily obtained, the West, which in general was governed by a more severe ecclesiastical discipline, would find in such a spectacle of divine goodness a consolation and not a danger. Perhaps we should add that the Church of Rome, whose glory it has ever been to maintain the truth untrammelled, even amid circumstances the most embarrassing and apparently the most dangerous for her, has always refrained from bending to the mean desires of certain too-easily-offended minds. She has ever kept in view the entire Catholic world, and not a group of men or of peoples; and as a faithful depositary, she has preserved the Gospel just as the Apostles preached it for all times and for all men, without suppressing the least detail thereof.

However that may be, the first citation of this admirable fragment which has been found is in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (i, 2, 24). Even though the final compilation of this book was the work of an Oriental bishop of the latter part of the third century (which is far from being demonstrated), it would be none the less probable that its author borrowed the greater part of the documents from the Western Church. The story of the adulteress in particular must have come to him from the evangelistaries of Rome, if we suppose that it was not, at that epoch, in the Oriental manuscripts, and we reach the conclusion that from the remotest antiquity the West has been acquainted with this passage. Moreover, there is confirmation of this view on every side. The manuscripts *D*, *F*, *G*, *H*, *K*, *U*, and three hundred others, from the sixth century to the ninth, as well as the Italic version, the *Vulgate*, and the Latin version of the *Concordance of Tatian*, contain these eleven verses. St. Jerome (*Adv. Pelag.*, 2, 6) notices their presence in a great number of Greek and Latin manuscripts of his time. We do not care to cite in proof of our thesis the authority of Papias, whose testimony Eusebius has recorded in his history (*Hist. Eccles.*, iii, 40). The woman accused of many sins, of whom he speaks: *ἐπὶ πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις διαβληθείσης γυναικός*, and who is mentioned in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, was no doubt the sinful woman who has been identified with Magdalen. Altogether there are enough complete texts to prove their integrity against the uncertainty of some and the silence of others. Here, again, if it is true that one citation has more authority than a hundred omissions, the majority of manuscripts ought to prevail against the minority, however respectable.

The scruples of philological criticism, too, may well vanish before the authority of so many manuscripts. We need not be startled by the frequent repetition of the conjunctive particle *δέ*, for the numerous variants, which must be admitted, suffice to suppress many of them, and chapters v, 35 *et seq.*, x, 2 *et seq.*, xi *et seq.*, plainly justify the others. We may seek, in vain, here, for expressions or phrases more familiar in St. Luke than in St. John. Ordinarily, such comparisons are arbitrary, and no one can sincerely deny that this whole passage is in the style of the fourth Evangelist. Those short reflections, found scattered here and there (v. 6 and 9), are surely of a piece with those which St. John delights to employ by way of completing the reader's impressions. His laconic and natural simplicity is seen in the whole dialogue (v. 10 and 11). Finally the phrasing, which is always equally calm, preserves also its ordinary negligence in the repetition of the same words (vii, 53, and viii, 1). There is nothing unlikely in this story,

and an intelligent exposition of the details suffices to do away with all difficulties. Besides, the incident by itself takes its place naturally in this chapter. St. John wishes again to place in evidence the keen and implacable hatred of the Pharisees, and the power of the look with which Jesus read their consciences. This whole picture has in it a something so pure, so inimitable, so grand, that all the doubts of critics vanish before the profound admiration with which it inspires the Christian soul. Its very beauty is the complete and irresistible demonstration of its authenticity. This several modern Protestants have finally recognised, and loyally declared.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The Illuminations of the Feast of Tabernacles and Their Symbolism—The True Light of Mankind Is Jesus—Objection Raised by This Solemn Assertion —Reply: Though Jesus Should Alone Give Testimony of Himself, They Must Believe Him; but the Father Gives Testimony with Him—"Where Is Thy Father?"—He Must Be Sought in the Son—This Took Place in the Court of the Treasury and Within Hearing of the Sanhedrim. (St. John viii, 12–20.)

The Feast of Tabernacles, with its manifold rites, not only commemorated, as we have already seen, the miraculous fountains that sprang from the rock during the pilgrimage in the desert, but two immense candelabra, which were lighted every evening in the women's court after the sun had set, and whose bright light flooded the whole Temple, represented in the eyes of all the luminous cloud which had guided the people of God in their journey. Individuals themselves took pleasure in illuminating their houses and in thanking Jehovah for His protection in the past, while they prayed for the coming of the Messianic light of the future.[1] The ceremony was prolonged far

[1] *Zach.* xiv, 7, 16.

into the night, and, according to all appearances,[2] was continued regularly up to the eighth day. Jesus, having returned to the Temple, was in the very enclosure [3] where these gigantic candelabra which had been used in this symbolical illumination were still standing. Quite naturally He drew from them the subject of His discourse, as He had borrowed that of the day before from the mystic ablutions that were being practised. Thus He, in His turn, will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles by proving that He Himself is the living realisation of its figurative rites.

"I am the light of the world," He said; "he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Symbols are but a fugitive image of the past, or an impotent aspiration toward the future; after a momentary enthusiasm they leave souls in the profoundest discouragement. This is why in the midst of the sadness that follows a festival day, before these extinguished candelabra, this vanished light, Jesus exclaims that He, Himself, is the true, unfailing light, not only of the Temple and of the Holy City, but of the whole world. This was attributing to Himself one of the prerogatives of the Messiah. For, according to the prophets, this latter was to rise like the "Sun of justice" [4] for the friends of God; or, again, like a great light for the people who walked in darkness. In Isaias God had said to Him: "It is a small thing that Thou shouldst be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to convert the dregs of Israel; behold, I have given Thee to be the Light of the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My Salvation even to the farthest part

[2] The *Talmud* speaks of it only for the first night of the festival. According to Maimonides, it took place each evening until the eighth day.

[3] This is the conclusion drawn from v. 20, where it is expressly stated that Jesus was then in the treasury (γαζοφυλάκιον), which was in the women's vestibule.

[4] *Malach.* iv, 2.

of the earth."[5] Light, life, and salvation are identical in Scripture, as are darkness, death, and perdition. Jesus, the Light of mankind, is, thereby, also, Life and Saviour. He rises in the night of error over the wandering world. His words and works make the light to shine. This light clears the way for mind and heart, warms those whom death had chilled, and saves that which was lost. Even while following the pillar of light, the Hebrews might have been dwelling in the night of the soul; and those who, at the sound of instruments and pious canticles, gave themselves up yesterday to their sacred dance around the mysterious candelabra, were, perhaps, carrying in their hearts the dense darkness that begets passions, a thousand criminal desires, and the confusion of thoughts common to sinners. But he who follows Jesus inevitably has the light of life, which Jesus diffuses, causing it to penetrate with far-reaching results into the profoundest depths of the soul. Beneath the rays of eternal truth the soul sees what is good, the heart desires it, and the will attains it.

This fresh assertion of His Messianic mission, no less categorical than the first, at once gives rise among the Pharisees to an objection which is very specious for souls still hesitating and unconvinced. "Thou givest testimony of Thyself; Thy testimony is not true," they say. Why should it not be true or legitimate? Because it stands alone, isolated, personal, and without the confirmation of another? Who, then, is there on earth qualified to sustain it? A witness is called and heard to some purpose only when he himself has seen and justly appreciated the facts which his deposition must establish. But in the present instance man is absolutely ignorant of the transcendent questions relating to the nature, origin, and mission of the Messiah. Consequently his testimony would add

[5] *Isa.* xlix, 6; compare this with xlii, 6.

nothing more to Jesus' assertion: He who has just said: "I am the light!" places Himself in a superior sphere where He can invoke only the testimony of the light, and that light is Himself or God.[6] "Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true; for I know whence I came and whither I go; but you know not whence I came or whither I go. You judge according to the flesh; I judge not any man in that manner." [7] They belong to different worlds. It is not for them who live in an inferior and wholly human sphere, to judge the mysteries of the divine life. He Who dwells in heavenly light, can tell what He has seen there. His knowledge is without illusion and He manifests it without reserve. The sanctity of His life proves it. Unjustly, then, do they refuse His testimony on the ground that it has no outside and authoritative confirmation.

But it is not really true that this testimony has no such confirmation; for the only guarantee of His words that He can invoke, namely, God the Father, He has completely in His favour. "And if I do judge," adds Jesus, "My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. And in your law [8] it is written that

[6] St. Augustine (*Tract. in Joan.*, xxxv, 4–6) sets forth this argument very strikingly: "Lumen et alia demonstrat et seipsum; testimonium sibi perhibet lux, aperit sanos oculos, et sibi ipsa testis est ut cognoscatur lux. . . . Ergo verum est testimonium luminis, sive se ostendit, sive alia; quia sine lumine non potes videre quodlibet aliud quod non est lumen."

[7] Great efforts have been made to explain this passage, *ἐγὼ οὐ κρίνω οὐδένα*. We have only to accept it as it is, joining thereto the ellipsis "in that manner," which the text allows.

[8] In saying "*your* law," He is far from intending to free His disciples at once from the prescriptions of Moses; He had explained Himself on that point. (*St. Matt.* v, 17.) His intention is to show that He accepts the discussion on the ground chosen by the Pharisees, the law, that law whose text they have ever ready on their lips, and which is their most decisive argument. Such is the particular intention of the word *your*. It is equally true that Jesus could not say *our law*, without seeming to abdicate His superior nature at the very moment when He asserts it. His relations with the law of Moses were not like those of the Jews. This law was His law,

the testimony of two men is true. I am one that give testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent Me giveth testimony of Me." Here, then, is all that is required to silence His adversaries. They exact two testimonies concerning His Messianic mission; He presents them categorically. According to the terms of the law, His case is won. For He Himself gives testimony of Himself, by His superhuman virtues, His holiness, His charity, His wisdom, and the Father is there as guarantee of what the Son attests by the miraculous works He gives Him to do. He might have added, as He will do later on, that ere long a third witness, the Holy Spirit, shall come to depose in His favour. What more is needed, since there shall thus be three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to affirm the legitimacy of a mission that is contested by the impiety of the Pharisees? And as an echo of this divine testimony, there shall also be on earth three forces that shall speak: the Christian spirit, the blood of martyrs, and the waters of regeneration.

Jesus spoke with a religious enthusiasm which His enemies took for the exaltation of a mystic. They thought that should they excite Him still more by a new question, they might draw from Him the decisive word that would compromise Him. The craftiness of the wicked scorns no means of triumph, and more than once has it slain its adversaries with flattery. The Pharisees were not ignorant of Whom Jesus spoke when He mentioned His Father. Frequently enough had they heard Him explain this delicate point, and, when they invite Him to return to it, they do so because they hope to catch Him sinning in speech and so make Him responsible for a decisive outbreak.

in so much as He had dictated it to Moses; it was the Jews' law in so much as they were subject to it. Thus also He said *my* Father or *your* Father, but not *our* Father, because He is not the Son of God in the same conditions as we are. The first interpretation is, perhaps, the most natural.

Since He spoke of this Father as a Witness, He had only to produce Him and let Him be heard.

"Where is Thy Father?" they asked Him suddenly. Jesus divined their thought, and, unmoved, He formulated His reply in language so transcendent that, although He spoke the truth, He left the people no opportunity to grasp His words and to be scandalised thereby. His words passed over the heads of the multitude and reached to His enemies, without involving Him in the immediate danger in which they had sought to entrap Him. "Neither Me do you know nor My Father," He said; "if you did know Me, perhaps, you would know My Father also." The meaning of this reply is that they must seek the Father, God, not in Himself, but in the Son Whom they have before them—not with the eyes of the body, but with those of the soul. They shall have no other manifestation of the heavenly Witness but this.

Thus He clearly maintains His relation in nature to the Father, His divine and eternal Sonship, in a word His divinity. According to the whole depth of His thought, the Father and He are only one by nature; they are bound one to the other by an essential relation so intimate that the idea of one involves the idea of the other. Not to know Jesus as the eternal Son of God is not to know God as the Father, and, therefore, not to have either the true idea of the Messiah, or the Christian idea of God. More than this: in God, the Son not only evokes the idea of paternity, He reproduces, as the Word, the perfect image of the Father, and remains indissolubly united to Him, making only one with Him. They alone, therefore, can ask where the Father is and how He is, who have refused to recognise the Son. This is the case with the Pharisees and with all the enemies of Jesus. Shutting their eyes before the living image of the Father, they ask to see Him; obstinate

in their denial of His most striking manifestation, the Son, they desire to learn who He is Himself; voluntarily blind, they cry out to the sun: "What is thy light and where art thou?" The sun responds: "I am the focus wherein the light is seen: look at me, and thou shalt see; we are one."

It was in the Temple, says the Evangelist, and near to the Hall of the Treasury,[9] that Jesus made this courageous declaration.

The Sanhedrim was holding its conference not far off. They could hear Jesus' voice, and listen to His discourses without the aid of their ministers. The Master was but little troubled by their proximity. Besides, no one ventured to assail Him. The hour of darkness had not yet come.

[9] The Evangelist takes pains to point out the importance of the words uttered by Jesus, *ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα*, and the place where they were uttered, the Treasury, situated near the hall of the Sanhedrim known by the name of *Gazith*. This Treasury, as its name indicates, was the place where all the wealth of the Temple was kept. Heliodorus (*Macch.* ii) had once tried to enter here to seize them. Thirteen boxes in the form of trumpets, and therefore named *Shofarot*, opened on the outside in the women's vestibule, and their object was signified by various inscriptions. The piety of the faithful was shown here by special gifts. Each trumpet had its particular object inscribed upon it. (See *Shekal.*, c. vi, 1.) On one was written *New sicles*, on another *Old sicles*, according to one's intention to pay the tax of the current or of the past year. A third was marked *Doves and pigeons;* a fourth, *Holocaust*, etc.

CHAPTER V

THEY WHO BELIEVE ALONE ARE FREE AND DIE NOT

Jesus Will Abandon Those Who Refuse to Accept Him—To Be Saved One Must Believe that Jesus Is *He* — Who Is *He?* — Sublime Definition — The Jews Shall Not Comprehend It Until Later— Those Who Believe Alone Are Free—Although They Call Themselves the Children of Abraham, the Jews Are Slaves of Sin and Spiritual Sons of the Demon—The Fury of Those Who Hear Him— Immortality Promised to the Faithful—Abraham Is Less than Jesus—Violent Ending of the Discussion. (St. John viii, 21–59.)

However triumphant His assertions and His replies may have been, since, among the multitude, secretly leavened by the malice of the Pharisees, faith seemed on the wane, while the current of opposition became stronger hour by hour, Jesus began sadly to repeat the threat He had already uttered against His declared enemies: "I go and you shall seek Me, and ye shall die in your sin. Whither I go ye cannot come." Nothing could be more categorical. They refuse to see the light before their eyes; it shall therefore be transferred elsewhere. Thus they shall forever dwell in the darkness they have desired. Their sin lies in

their opposition to Jesus' authentic mission. It shall be the cause of their death, for their souls shall perish for not having acknowledged the Christ, and shall be reproved for their obstinacy in the presence of His striking manifestation.

For them henceforth there is no Messiah on earth, no Saviour in heaven. In pursuance of the realisation of their material ideas, they will, perhaps, breathe fanaticism into the souls of some poor senseless beings, and may try to raise up Messiahs who will appear ridiculous; but they will see at once the vanity of their efforts. Then shall they send forth their cries of hope or of impatience in the sight of God, Who shall not listen to them. When one does not accept the bridge that is to join earth to heaven, he remains in eternal exile. This is what Jesus meant to tell them in accents as tender as they were awful.

Once again, His hearers, treating His words with derision, asked one another if it was His intention to go and enforce recognition of Himself as Messiah no longer merely among the Gentiles, but among the dead. "Will He kill[1] Himself," they said, "because He said, Whither I go, you cannot come?" Paying no heed to this irony, Jesus continued: "Ye are from beneath, I am from above. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world." This suffices to prove that where He is going they cannot follow, since they are neither of the same origin, nor of the same nature, nor for the same fatherland. They who resemble one another seek one another's company. Faith alone can establish this resemblance, and, together with the same as-

[1] Faber (*Epist.* 1, ii, 159) has conjectured that this should be read: ἀποξενοῖ instead of ἀποκτενεῖ, as if the Jews had said: "Will He exile Himself?" instead of: "Will He kill Himself?" This reading has only the advantage of reproducing what the Jews had said before, but it is unauthorised. We can see nothing unreasonable in supposing that the Jews indulged in coarse jokes. They asked each other if He were going to the other world. They would be unwilling to follow Him there.

pirations, provide the same destiny. Hence the logical conclusion that if they do not approach the Master by faith, uniting their lives with His, they shall all perish without repentance. "For," He adds, "if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Nothing could be more daring than the form that Jesus employs here to express His whole dignity with a reticence full of meaning. On the one hand, He alludes to the definition of Himself which God had formerly given to Moses,[2] and thus He indicates His divinity and the necessary faith in His superior nature; on the other, He does not express His title as Messiah and Christ, but in the vague and solemn phrasing which He employs He includes the complete idea of His Messianic mission.

The Jews then press Him to explain His thought: again would they like to draw from Him a positive avowal of His pretensions, in order to accuse Him with greater success. "Who art thou?" they exclaim. And Jesus, completing the beautiful definition which He had just outlined, fearless of their violence, adds: "I am absolutely what I tell you." [3] He is, therefore, the Messiah, and is

[2] Literally the text is: "If you believe not that I am. . . ." The attribute is wanting in the clause. But either it is in the verb, and then the text must be translated: "If you believe not that I am in existence," or, in other words: "If you believe not in My existence as the Envoy of Heaven"; or it is not in the verb, and in this case we can imagine several meanings: "If you believe not that I am, Who am," whose similarity to God's words to Moses is evident (*Exod.* iii, 14): "I am Who am," or, again, "If you believe not that I am He," that is, your Messiah, so long desired and celebrated by the prophets; or, in fine, "If you believe not that I am the sole Messiah," and in this case we find it a legitimate parallel to the passages of *Deut.* xxxii, 39, and *Isa.* xliii, 10: "that you may know that I am Myself."

[3] The text is obscure, and interpretations of it are numerous. It is impossible to translate it: "I am the beginning Who speak to you." It would have to read, ἡ ἀρχὴ, not τὴν ἀρχὴν. Τὴν ἀρχὴν must necessarily be taken as an adverb, as it is frequently in the Old Testament (*Dan.* viii, 1; *Gen.* xli, 21; xliii, 20), and sometimes in profane authors. Thus in Herodotus, ii, 28: ὡς ἀρχὴν ἐγένετο, it means *from the beginning*, whereas in i, 9, ἀρχὴν γὰρ ἐγὼ μηχανήσομαι οὕτω ὥστε. κ. τ. λ., it signifies *absolutely, precisely*. (Compare Xenophon, *Sympos.*, t. 15; *Œcon.*, ii, 11; viii, 2; *Cyrop.*, 1, 2, 3; Plato,

such from the beginning; that is to say, that, in order to make Himself thoroughly known to those who question Him, He implies that He *is*, by essence, since He is from *all eternity* as God; it may be, even, that He is about to speak His own name, the Word, and thus give the most complete and most sublime definition of His person. He had, indeed, many other explanations and even accusations to make, all as true as God, from Whom He has them and in Whose name He speaks. His listeners were probably not the same as in the preceding discourse, since the Evangelist observes that they did not understand that Jesus spoke of His Father. This is the only way to explain their lack of intelligence.

If the Master had not as yet mentioned before them Him from Whom He held His mission, we can understand how their minds sought upon earth Him Who could be found only in Heaven. Besides, the mind is always narrow when the heart is evil; it may be that this multitude, gathered from all parts, was not very good. But if it is at present incapable of understanding, perhaps for it the hour of great enlightenment shall come later on. "When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father hath taught Me, these things I speak; and He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him." When they see Him, despite the hatred of His enemies, coming forth alive from the arms of death and glorious from the depths of the tomb, they shall suspect, perhaps, that His work was not simply His own, but that of God, His Father, Whose thought He reflected and Whose word He repeated.

Gorgias, 34; *Apol. Socr.*, 17.) It is simpler, therefore, to translate the text word for word, regarding the verb as understood: "From the beginning I am what I tell you," or, more daring yet: "From the beginning I am Who speak to you [the Word]"; or, in fine, "I am precisely what I say to you."

On that day of restoration, they shall comprehend the intimate union that existed between the Envoy and Him Who sent Him. The Father shall have proved that He is with the Son, communicating to Him His power and His life, and proclaiming thus His fidelity to His will. Here we find one of the many proofs of the perfect sanctity of Jesus. He is conscious of having continued invariably, even as man, in the most perfect union with, and most filial dependence upon, the Father, doing all that He desires and because He desires it.

As they listened to the development of these words, of which the Evangelist evidently gives but an abridgment —a fact which explains their comparative obscurity—many believed in Jesus. The sublimity of this doctrine, which they could scarcely grasp, commanded, however, their admiration. They felt themselves moved to look for something astonishing from a man who spoke such lofty discourse. A word of strong conviction always impresses the multitude, even though it be beyond its intellectual powers.

A part of these new believers, observes the Evangelist, were Jews, that is, inhabitants of Jerusalem. The courageous and triumphant attitude of the young Prophet in the very Temple itself suited their Messianic hopes. Eagerly wishing for a Messiah, they believed they had found Him.

Jesus, at once perceiving the false direction which their faith was taking, and desirous of correcting it, announces to them the freedom of the soul, which is better than that of the body, and the removal of a yoke heavier than that of the Romans, namely, that of Satan: "If you continue in My word you shall be My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." No doubt to persevere in the faith they shall have to surmount many obstacles. Their first care must be faithfully to observe

the teaching they have received. However worthless the soil, they shall see the good grain mature, and the results shall prove a consolation. What joy in throwing off the yoke of sin, and in finding one's self once more free! The word they have received is the truth, the truth is the revelation of good, the revelation of good is the exclusion of evil, the exclusion of evil constitutes the holy independence of the children of God. In this sense the Messiah is truly a Liberator, and His coming inaugurates the moral emancipation of mankind.

These words, misunderstood by some, maliciously distorted by others, at once stirred up a most violent storm. The ancient Judaical pride thus offended rebelled: "We are the seed of Abraham," cried out some patriots in the crowd, "and we have never been slaves to any man. How sayest thou: Ye shall be free?" One is struck at first by the claim implied in this outcry on the part of the Jews, and it is to be regretted that they did not make its meaning clearer. Had they done so, it would have been possible to discover the extremes to which their blind vanity proceeded. If they meant to speak of political liberty, Egypt and Babylon could reply that their fathers had been captives in a strange land, and their national history told how, even in Palestine, they had more than once been forced to bow the head beneath their neighbour's yoke. At the very time when they were speaking they had only to raise their eyes and see the Roman eagles dominating the citadels of the city, and the soldiers of Cæsar guarding the Temple from the top of the tower Antonia. If they wish to be sincere, instead of speaking so proudly, they ought to cry to heaven,[4] as their ancestors did, that they are bondsmen in the very land where God has established them. If they mean individual liberty, we can in-

[4] *II Esdras* ix, 36.

deed admit that the Israelite had rarely been reduced to the condition of a slave, and that among all peoples, the children of Abraham better than all others bore stamped upon their brows the dignity of free men. Even if they pretend to lay claim to a religious superiority over all nations, we can understand the grounds of this pride. By it were inspired Moses and Daniel in their courageous speech in the name of their people, the one before Pharaoh in Egypt, the other before the Chaldean king. But Jesus was not referring to this glorious side of a purely natural dignity. He had in view the moral slavery that sin engenders, and the corresponding liberty of which justice is the germ. They, in their ignorance, received as an insult the most consoling of promises.

Undismayed, the Master takes up both parts of their objection to destroy them one after the other. Here is His thesis: It is not true that they have not known slavery; it is not true that they are Abraham's posterity.

"Amen, amen, I say to you, that whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Considered as an act, indeed, sin is but a service offered to the devil, while considered as a habit, it is found to be a tyrant imposing on man its most detestable exactions. St. Paul maintains this same doctrine when he writes [5] that man must be the slave either of sin or of justice, and, again, that the sinner yields himself to be the slave of the sin that he commits; St. Peter [6] also takes these words of the Master as authority in declaring that the sinner becomes the slave of sin which has overcome him. "Now the servant abideth not in the house forever," continues Jesus. He is with the master of the house only for the purpose of serving him in a humiliat-

[5] *Rom.* vi, 16 *et seq.*; vii, 14.

[6] *II Epist.* ii, 19: "Promising them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave."

ing condition. The hour approaches when Hagar is to be driven from the domestic hearth. This is the lot of sinners, who may be tolerated for a time in the house of God, but who shall be expelled therefrom in the end, as troublesome and disagreeable strangers. "But the Son abideth forever," and with Him dwell those whom the Father deigns to adopt, because the Son hath chosen them to be co-heirs of His Kingdom. "If, therefore, the Son shall have made you free, ye shall be free indeed." For to His faithful He shall communicate His rights by an act of His love, and His own life by the influence of His word. It is in this sense that by Him, the Eternal Truth, the blind and enslaved Israelites can be set free.

"I know that ye are the children of Abraham, but ye seek to kill Me because My word hath no place in you." No man can deny their noble descent through the long centuries, but a certain moral fact, their obstinate incredulity, has compromised it. Can they be children of the father of believers, and have no faith? Can they, instead of loving, detest? Can they seek to kill the Messenger of Heaven, when it were needful to welcome Him? They are far, indeed, from the great patriarch, who saluted God in His angels beneath the ancient oak of Mambre, and hoped against all hope in the word of Jehovah. "I," says Jesus, with mournful irony, "speak that which I have seen with My Father; and ye do the things which ye have seen with your father." Every one speaks and acts according to the principle from which he proceeds. But there are two principles, good and evil; two fathers, God and Satan. Since they to whom Jesus speaks have other views and other works than His, it is clear that they are not of the same line. But He is the Son of God. Therefore they are the children of another. This conclusion irritates them still further, and they cry out: "Abraham is our

father." Jesus then resumes His reply: "If ye be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not. Ye do the works of your father." The moral sonship here meant is proved by moral resemblance; consequently it cannot exist where there is a contradiction in conduct. Their true father must be, not he whom they name, but he whom they imitate.

It is at this moment that the Jews, perceiving the overpowering force of this argument, finally pass to the spiritual ground to which Jesus has summoned them. "We are not," say they, "born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." It is true, they are not worshippers of false divinities; they are faithful to the law of Moses; no drop of pagan blood flows in their veins; they can boldly proclaim themselves Israelites. But is this enough to prove their sonship? "If God were your Father," replies Jesus, "ye would indeed love Me; for, from God I proceeded and came, for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not know My speech? Because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father ye will do." The awful word has at last burst from the Master's lips. For a moment He seemed to cast it back within His heart, but the attitude of His enemies drags it from Him. In direct line, according to the spirit, the wicked are the children of the demon. What matters, after this, that they are descended from Abraham according to the flesh? Their real and true father, as is proved by their hopes, is Satan. "He was a murderer from the beginning." He destroyed mankind in the first Adam, and he is preparing to destroy it again, if possible, in the Second. It is he who breathed anger and vengeance, together with all the passions, into the human

soul; he armed the hand of Cain [7] against his brother, and thereby became the typical murderer. "And he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him." For Satan, by revolting against God, made himself an outcast from eternal truth; he obstinately shook off its light; he is shut up in the darkness of falsehood, without a single ray of moral truth [8] remaining by him. The sinful man is less unfortunate; he still retains some fragments of it, and hence can return into the light by the way of penance. Satan is the eternally obstinate one who will not be converted, because, rising up against God and seeking to destroy Him as far as he can, he has made absolute falsehood the full development of his being. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof." The demon is foredoomed both by nature and life to have his being in falsehood as in his proper element, and nothing can attract him to the truth. Such also is the conduct of his children. "But if I say the truth, ye believe Me not," Jesus goes on. They have a horror of the light. Yet it is certain that the Master's word has the note of truth. His whole life proves it, for he who is absolutely just cannot lie. "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" Fully conscious of His unalterable sanctity, the Son of God interrupts His discourse for a moment, and in solemn silence seems to defy His accusers. None dares rise up to cast a shadow over His lightsome face. Therefore by their own confession, He is without sin. But, if He is without sin, He lies not. "If I say the truth

[7] Comparison of this passage with the *First Epistle of St. John*, ch. iii, 12 and 15, seemed to many to show that Our Lord in thus characterising Satan had in view especially the murder of Abel. But it is probable that He was inspired also with a more general idea.

[8] However, the devil has that metaphysical truth by which he is a being. That which *is* is true, and consequently has a certain measure of truth. But the Saviour here means to speak of the truth which is in the will and in free action. We must not look for it in Satan.

to you," He adds with new energy, "why do ye not believe Me?" He has challenged His enemies to judge Him; He now calls upon them to judge themselves in turn. As they make no reply, He draws the conclusion, which was the very point to be demonstrated: "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Then the fury of the people broke forth in insults: "Do we not say well," they cried out, "that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" A Samaritan to the Jews' mind was not only a heretic, but, above all, a miscreant and one possessed of a devil; he was a madman. Impiety and lunacy, in their opinion, alone could have dictated the incomparable discourses which they had just heard; and, after having taken Jesus' reasoning as so many insults, they offer Him insults in return as reasons. But the Saviour makes it clear that their insults do not trouble His peace of soul. "I have not a devil," He says, "but I know My Father, and ye have dishonoured Me." There is, then, a radical opposition between Him and the Jews. He is eager to glorify His Father, and thus prove His real Sonship; they are anxious to injure Him in the person of His Messenger Who glorifies Him, and thus they disclose their diabolical parentage. Happily, the Son has not to seek His own glory, "there is one that seeketh and judgeth."

Returning then to those of His hearers who are still sympathetic toward Him, He endeavours with a last word to sustain their courage.

"Amen, amen, I say to you," He says, "if any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever." He meant by this not only spiritual death, but, in general, the death that true believers are to vanquish, as the Son of Man has vanquished it. This assertion again scandalises them

and gives rise to a new outbreak more awful than the first. "Now we know," exclaimed the multitude, "that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest: If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death forever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?" Once again Jesus will not respond to this perilous question maliciously and persistently renewed by His adversaries, but His very silence on this point lets us know that He holds Himself greater than Abraham and all the prophets. Yet it is not by His own testimony that He wishes to establish His greatness; He leaves this to His Father, Who has assumed the work of declaring and proving Who He is. "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of whom ye say that He is your God." And, indeed, the prophecies fulfilled, the miracles achieved are nothing other than the voice of this God. "And ye have not known Him, but I know Him; and if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him and do keep His word." Thus is He, as Man, the chief and model of believers, the first to merit the reward and the first to receive it. They who shall imitate Him in His fidelity to His Father shall be, like Him, free, and, like Him, stronger than death. He opens the great era of triumph and joy for the universe; He realises all the hopes of its patriarchs and fulfils all the desires of fallen humanity. "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it and was glad." [9]

[9] Did he see it, during his life, not only in prophetic figure, but also in an ecstatic vision? Some would insist upon this, but it is scarcely probable. Jesus speaks here of Abraham after death, and He means that amid the imperfect joys of the other world, which he possessed, the patriarch awaited his Liberator, and when he saw Him arising after many centuries of waiting, he leaped with joy in Limbo, or in the depth of his tomb. The opinion that the dead follow with interest the events of earth was no more foreign to the

What a contrast! The father longed for Him with so much patience, welcomed Him with so much love; the children deny Him with so much obstinacy or endure Him with so much hate! "Thou art not yet fifty years old," [10] they exclaimed indignantly, "and hast Thou seen Abraham?" And Jesus, with an impressive solemnity that lends meaning to every word of His thought, replies: "Amen, amen, I say to you, Before Abraham was made,[11] *I am.*" Abraham was born, like every other creature; He was not born, He has not been, He never shall be; He knows but one moment in His superior existence, it is the present that marks the eternal actuality of His existence: *He is.* And so He returns to the definition which He has twice given of Himself in this discourse, and fears not to speak the language of Jehovah, His Father. *I am*, this is at once His name, the secret of His nature and of His incomparable superiority over Abraham and all the representatives of mankind.

After such an assertion, there was nothing more to do than to fall on one's knees and adore, or to take up stones and protest. The malice of the Jews chose the latter course; [12] but Jesus, aided by the tumult and protected

Jews than to the pagans. The former beheld (*Isa.* xxix, 22, 23) Jacob in the tomb troubled about the lot of his children, and the latter acknowledged with the poet that the dead are not wholly unconcerned in the things of the earth. (Virgil, *Æn.*, vi, 655.)

[10] Some ancient writers, among others St. Irenæus (*Adv. Hæres.*, 3, 22), concluded from this passage that Our Lord was then more than forty years old; but everything is against this interpretation. The Jews here took fifty years as a round figure, an extreme concession, and not as an exact limit. They mean, "Thou hast not yet passed the ripe age, Thou art not yet an old man, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"

[11] The most exact translation would be: "Before Abraham became, I am." The verb γενέσθαι indicates the passing from nothing into being, and it belongs to Abraham, a mere creature. The verb εἰμί, "I am," and not "I was," excluding the idea of *becoming*, a transition, proclaims the God in Jesus.

[12] In all probability this took place in the enclosure of the Temple. It was easy to find stones there at this time when the repairing of the Temple was

by His friends, or, perhaps, by a miracle of His power, suddenly concealed Himself from their fury.

He left His courageous declaration to this excited multitude as another argument to condemn those whom He had not been able to convince.

not yet completed. (*St. John* ii, 20.) It was only under Herod Agrippa II that the work ceased.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAN BORN BLIND

The Disciples' Question Concerning Physical Evil in the Case of One Born Blind—Jesus' Response—Conditions Under Which He Gives the Blind Man the Sense of Sight—Siloe and Its Mystical Signification—General Excitement Produced by the Miracle—The Inquisition and What Came of It—The Triumphant Attitude of the Man Who Was Cured — Results of the Miracle: for the Blind Man, Faith; for Others, Obstinacy in Their Blindness. (St. John ix, 1–41.)

As He was leaving the Temple and the tumultuous crowd, Jesus noticed, seated in the place set apart for beggars,[1] a man who had been blind from his birth. The pity which He[2] seemed to feel for him struck the disciples, and as they in turn began to realise the sad condition of the unfortunate man, they set about investigating its cause. "Rabbi," they asked, "who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" This indeed is a question that has always appealed to serious men, namely, the question of physical evil when apparently unattended by moral evil or sin.

[1] This was in the neighbourhood of the Temple. (Compare *Acts* iii, 2.)
[2] The word εἶδεν indicates that Jesus regarded the blind man with particular attention.

In the present instance, the Apostles without doubt perceive two solutions of the difficulty: the man is punished either for his own sins or for those of his family. The first hypothesis seems to them scarcely satisfactory. For the beggar was born blind; to say that God struck him in anticipation of his future faults is too improbable, to admit that He punished him for crimes of which he was guilty either in a former life or in the womb of his mother, is impossible to a Jew; such chimerical theories were left to the philosophers of India or Egypt.[3]

There remained therefore the second supposition, which was much more in keeping with the principles of the Rabbinical school. The parents of this man might have sinned for him. It was admitted that a law of solidarity caused not only the blood but also the merits and demerits of parents to be transmitted into the life of the children. God had said that He would visit the crimes of the head of the family upon the fourth generation, and would reward virtue unto the thousandth.[4] This perhaps is the case here.

However, the disciples propose their twofold explanation only with distrust, and they seem to look for a third. For Jesus, indeed, replied: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Good works should be performed parallel with evil works. In the trial, even though unjust, which he undergoes, the virtuous man is called upon to glorify God by the example of humble patience, by the

[3] Some have thought from a passage in Josephus (*B. J.*, bk. ii, ch. xii) that the Pharisees of those times believed in the transmigration of souls, but it is generally admitted that the alleged text treats of the resurrection of the body. It is not even probable that they believed in the pre-existence of souls. No trace of this doctrine is found in the writings posterior to Jesus Christ, and we suppose that it was borrowed from the Gnostic sects of the early Christian ages.

[4] *Exod.* xx, 5.

courage he shows in paying his share of expiation in the history of mankind, and, finally, by the opportunity he presents to the good to practise charity, and to God to prove by His miraculous intervention His inexhaustible mercy.

In the present instance, the providential result of this unfortunate man's infirmity shall be to show forth the omnipotence of the Messiah, and thereby awaken faith in souls. "I," said Jesus, "must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." Thus the Heavenly Worker sees approaching the end of His hard day, and wishes to neglect nothing in order to increase the glory of Him Who has sent Him to labour in the field of humanity. After death He will enter into eternal rest. The time for Messianic action shall have passed. Since He has presented Himself in the Temple as the Light of the world, He will prove that He has uttered no untruth. Therefore He will cause the divinity of His mission to shine in the eyes of all, and the light of day to penetrate the eyes of this blind man.

Then, spitting upon the ground, Jesus mingled some of the soil with His own saliva and applied it to the eyes of the man who was born blind. "Go," He said to him, "wash in the pool of Siloe." Was it the Master's wish to recall with this clay which He mixed with His hands the act of the Creator in the beginning of the world, and to intimate that He, too, was about to produce a new sense in this sightless man; or did He mean simply to protest against the Pharisees' ridiculous prescriptions concerning the Sabbath? [5] Both suppositions have been entertained,

[5] *Tanchuma*, fol. 10, 2: "Dixit Samuel: Etiam sputum jejunum ponere vetitum est super palpebras Sabbato."

but no one has perceived the mystical and most important sense conveyed by the Master in this action. Assuredly, it is undeniable that to cure this blind man, Jesus had no need either to cover his eyes with mud or to send him to Siloe. In reality His true remedy for the sick was His own omnipotence. But then why has this omnipotence made His action here subordinate to altogether superfluous exterior means?

The Evangelist, in order to guide us in our understanding of the mystery, remarks that the name Siloam or Siloe signifies *sent*.[6] This fountain was south of the city between Mounts Sion and Ophel, almost at the point where the Tyropœon rejoined the valleys of Hinnon and Josaphat. Its waters, divided into two vast basins, served for the washing of clothes. Here, too, came to be purified those who had contracted any impurity. So useful a

[6] There is no doubt that *silohah* is a substantive or verbal adjective derived from *salah* ("to send"), either in the passive participle *kal* or in the *pihel*, with a solution of the strong *daguesch* in *iod*. (See Ewald, *Lehrb. d. Hebr. Spr.*, § 155, a, and 156, b.) The waters of Siloe were an outflow of the spring which later was called the *Fountain of the Virgin*. Captain Warren and several others have traced the entire course of the canal from one pool to the other; the history of its construction has been discovered in six lines of Hebrew of the time of the Kings. (Cf. *Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, vol. i, p. 385.) The following is a translation of this curious inscription, with its omissions, the only one, except that of the stele of Mesa, that remains of the royal epoch. ". . . Cutting of the tunnel. This is the history of the digging; when . . . one pick against the other. And when there were only three more cubits to cut away, they heard one another shouting that the . . . was in the rock to the right and the left. And on the day when they cut through, the miners struck their picks one against the other. And the waters flowed from the reservoir to the birket over a course of 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head of the miners was 100 cubits."

The drilling of this tunnel, although marked by many delays due to the want of a compass, is, indeed, a very remarkable achievement. From start to finish there is a grade of thirty centimetres, which tells with what skill the canal was planned. The walls and cracks in the drain dug in the tufa are coated with a layer of red and very hard cement. The gallery, roughly hewn, reaches in some places a height of four and one-half metres, in others only forty-five centimetres; in the latter places one must crawl on hands and knees in order to get through. This, together with the unevenness and numerous blind alleys, makes it very difficult to explore the tunnel.

spring, whose waters flowed with silence, according to the prophet's words,[7] and, although rising and falling intermittently, never ran dry, was a great blessing for the city. Hence the comparison made between it and the Messiah. It was from this spring and from no other that the water was drawn for the mystical libation of the golden urn. Issuing from the earth below the hill of the Temple and running from east to west, beside the Sanctuary, it might well seem the typical image of the Heavenly Envoy Who would come forth from the bosom of His Father to wash away, like the waters of Siloe, the stains of sinners and to quench the thirst of the just.

Jesus therefore, having solemnly announced that He was the true fountain of life, the Siloe of the spiritual order, wishes to furnish a proof of it. The clay which He has applied to the blind man's eyes will render more tangible the comparison between the prophetic symbol and its living realisation. For, whereas the water of the fountain will remove the earthy envelope from those sightless eyes, it is He, Jesus, the Spring of all charity, the True One sent from heaven (Siloe), Who will penetrate the depths of the eye to bring back life, and the inner regions of the soul to wash away sin by the inpouring of grace.

Such is the real sense of the order Jesus gives to the blind man. The sacred spring was at some distance from the Temple.[8] While the blind man was being led thither,

[7] *Isa.* viii, 6.

[8] It was difficult, during our first two journeys in the East, to form from the actual condition of the fountain of Siloe any idea of what it had formerly been. We owe it to the excavations made by Mr. Bliss in 1896, that we have recently been able to follow the road taken by the blind man from the time he left the Temple, or rather the Double Gate, the ordinary rendezvous of beggars, till he reached the pool of Siloe, which has been discovered in the almost quadrangular shape which it had formerly. A good road, well paved, descended from the Double Gate and joined a street of steps, running between one of the walls of the town to the west, and that of the piscina to the east. These two walls not being absolutely parallel, the higher

the Master departed with His disciples. He had no interest in proving the reality of the miracle, whereas He had a great deal to gain by being absent from the crowd when the blind man should return able to see.

The sudden, radical, and final cure took place as Jesus had promised, and when the subject of the miracle, on his way back from Siloe, entered the city, it was quite an event. His neighbours, who were accustomed to see him begging, halted in astonishment, saying: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some replied: "This is he"; and others exclaimed: "No, but he is like him." But he who had been cured cleared away the difficulty by assuring them that it was indeed no other, and to all their questions he invariably replied that a man called Jesus had prepared clay, and had then covered his eyes with it, and had bidden him go bathe in Siloe; that he had obeyed His command, and that now he saw.[9] When they asked where Jesus was, he answered: "I know not."

steps are a little wider than the lower ones: thus the former measure 7 m. 22 and the latter only 6 m. 70. They vary also in height from 16 to 24 centimetres, and in depth from 1 m. 50 to 4 m. There must have been some reason for such irregularities, since they are found also in the primitive stairway hewn partly in the rock and discovered underneath the steps constructed in the Roman or Byzantine epoch. However this may be, we can picture to ourselves, and not without pious emotion, the blind man, slowly descending this uneven roadway, and leaning against the walls to guide his footsteps. If he followed the more ancient stairs, and we are of the opinion that he did, he must have entered the piscina, which measured 23 m. by 21 m. 50, by the northern portico where afterward was built a church which has been excavated with its marble, mosaic pavement, its three naves, and the apse with semicircular tiers. By the more recent stairs the piscina was approached from the south, across a court-yard from which one reached the pool by steps. This was not the most direct way for the blind man, and we ought to suppose that he preferred it rather than the other. Slowly and carefully had he found his way down these uneven steps which led from the Temple and the town, but with joy and haste must he have mounted them again. What a debt of gratitude we owe to those excavators who enable us to reconstruct thus the Gospel history on the very spot where it was enacted!

[9] There is no reason for surprise at the term ἀνέβλεψα, "I have recovered my sight," as used by one born blind. Grotius replies to this very suita-

It would be difficult to imagine anything more lifelike, more natural, more complete than this description given by the Evangelist. In the multitude every shade of hesitation, of incredulity, of conviction; in the man whose sight was restored, the enthusiastic ingenuousness of a sincere man. The universal excitement leads to an inquiry. The Thaumaturgus is called for. The beggar scarcely knows Him; he gives His name correctly, but can tell no more about Him. But the man called Jesus is no longer there. He has done a good work, and has passed on.

All this happened on a Sabbath-day. The curiosity to prove juridically so strange a miracle, the fact of the Sabbath violated by the healing of a sick man, the deep enmity against Him Whom the mendicant had just named, gave rise to as many serious motives for deferring the matter to a council of competent men. The members of this tribunal, however, are not known. On the Sabbath-day neither the Sanhedrim nor any other tribunal held court. There is probably question here of a mere improvised assembly in the first synagogue encountered, in which the Pharisees assumed for themselves the principal part. With their carping minds and their avowed hostility they could not but constitute a severe and unfavourably disposed tribunal. Even to-day our positivist philosophers would not proceed to an inquest with more cleverness or more obstinate malevolence. They began by questioning the beggar and making him repeat his story. He did so with perfect exactitude, using the very same terms as in his first deposition.

bly, "Non male *recipere* quis dicitur, quod communiter tributum humanæ naturæ ipsi abfuit." Pausanias (*Messen*, iv, 12, 5), and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (vi), employ the same expression in speaking of some who had been born blind and who recovered their sight. To see is a natural right belonging to man, so much so that even when deprived of it from his birth, one may still say that he recovers it the day on which he obtains his sight.

At once a discussion arose as to the appreciation of the facts, and two well-defined factions were formed. For some, the point worthy of attention was that the Thaumaturgus had allowed Himself not only to effect a medicinal cure on the Sabbath-day, which in itself was a sin, but also to prepare clay,[10] which was really a crime. For others, the clearest point was that a miracle had been performed.[11] And while the former concluded that he could not be of God who did not observe the Sabbath, the latter contended that a sinner could not work such wonders. Both parties became bitterly aroused, and the discussion was heated. They appealed to the judgment of the witness. "What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes?" He answered: "He is a prophet." Common-sense could find no other conclusion in the presence of such a miracle. But they who had put the question counted on a reply less clear, which would leave some room for an explanation of this prodigy by sorcery or by some device of the medical art. They were angered at having obtained such a reply.

From this moment it is the purely malevolent party of the tribunal alone that conducts the affair. Pretending to look upon the mendicant as an impostor in connivance with Jesus to impose upon the multitude, the judges re-

[10] The Evangelist emphasises *τὸν πηλὸν ἐποίησεν* intentionally. This was the principal grievance of the extreme defenders of the Sabbatic rest.

[11] This is the ordinary way of interpreting their opinion, and it is supported by the consideration that Jesus had followers even among the chiefs of the Pharisees. (*St. John* vii, 50.) Nevertheless their objection might be understood in this sense, that it is not possible for a transgressor of the Sabbath to perform a miracle, and thus the latter arrived at the same conclusion as the former: "There can be no miracle in this case," or, still better, the former laid down the major of the syllogism: "He is an enemy of God who transgresses the Sabbath," the latter the minor: "But an enemy of God cannot perform such great miracles." And both conclude that there is no miracle. However, as the text adds that there was a conflict between the various opinions, the explanation we have followed is the more probable.

sume, as the point of the discussion, the reality of the miracle itself, and not the consequences to be drawn from it.

They therefore appeal to the testimony of the father and the mother. Having cited them before their bar, they directed their questions to three principal points, the identity of the individual: "Is this your son?" the certainty of his affliction: "Who you say was born blind?" and finally the secret of his cure: "How then doth he now see?" To the first two questions the parents respond in the affirmative and without any embarrassment. The third forces them to excuse their timidity and to deny their ability to answer. The rumour was current among the people—the system of intimidation has been employed in all times—that the Pharisees had resolved to exclude from the Synagogue all who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. No doubt, the fear of making the opposition stronger by such violence withheld them from fulfilling these threats. But they succeeded none the less in cooling the zeal of some, and frequently in silencing the faith of the most strongly convinced. This is what happens now. In view of the excommunication that may exclude them from the Synagogue and even from the people of God,[12] the witnesses questioned declare themselves unable to answer the last question. "But how he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; ask the man himself, he is of age, let him speak for himself."

[12] According to the *Talmud*, there were three grades of excommunication: The lightest excluded from the Synagogue, and from contact with all Israelites, including members of the family, with whom one excommunicated could not come in contact, unless at a distance of four arm's-lengths. Another, severer, which was validly pronounced only by an assembly of ten men, forbade the guilty all relations with the Jews, even for the purpose of buying food. And, last of all, the most terrible consisted in solemnly excluding the accursed from all communication with the children of Israel, and in abandoning him to God's judgment. (See Buxtorf, *Leg. Chald.*) Others claim that the *Mishna* agrees with the Gospel that there was only one grade of excommunication. (See Gildemeister, *Blendwerke d. Vulgar. Ration.* p. 10.)

The man who was born blind is therefore summoned and subjected to a second examination. Despite all the art of the Pharisees, he will again give his testimony, each word clearer than the other, and in his unaffected simplicity he will humiliate those who hoped to triumph by his timidity or by his embarrassment.

"Give glory to God,"[13] they say to him with wheedling hypocrisy; in other words: Retract thy blasphemy, wretched man, who hast dared to make Jesus a prophet. "We know that this man is a sinner." Whence do they know that? Do they speak according to their theology, or according to their personal impressions and the self-interested conclusions which they have just reached? The man who was cured troubles himself but little about this, and, interrupting them with an irony which judiciously places the fact above all theological disputes, he says: "If He be a sinner, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Nothing could be clearer, and all discussion is superfluous. The Pharisees perceive it; they decide then to return to the incident itself, as if on this point the examination had not been concluded previously. "What did He do to thee? How did He open thine eyes?" A fresh recital of the event will, perhaps, furnish a natural explanation of the miracle and deliver them from this perplexing difficulty. But the man perceives their bad faith and, indignant, with unexpected boldness, he begins to rally them bitterly: "I have told you already, and you have heard," he exclaims, "Why would you hear it again? Will you also become His disciples?" This was more than enough to drive them into a fury which they had till now with difficulty restrained. The Pharisees rose up in a

[13] These were the words of Josue to Achan inviting him to reveal the theft of which he was guilty. (*Jos.* vii, 19.) In *I Kings* the Philistines are likewise called upon to repair the injury done to Jehovah, by these words: "You shall give glory to the God of Israel."

mass and cursed him forthwith, exclaiming: "Be thou His disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as to this Man, we know not whence He is." Thus did religious passion cause them to forget that no one ceased to be a disciple of Moses by believing in the Messiah foretold by Moses; that the law of Moses has but one object, that of guiding Israel by the hand to the realisation of the promises; and that the great law-giver of the desert himself proved his mission only by a miracle, as Jesus proves His to-day. The man born blind then is about to open their eyes and to point out to them that it is not necessary to be a doctor in Israel in order to know whence Jesus derives His mission. "Why," said he ironically, "herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes." To know whence a man is who does extraordinary things would seem to be a simple matter. One cannot be a thaumaturgus and have an evil origin. "Now we know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth." But lo! Jesus has been heard, and in what circumstances! "From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind." But this Man has just done so. Plainly, "unless this Man were of God He could not do anything." This argument could admit of no other reply but compliance or insult. Insult is their preference. Beyond all self-control because of their humiliation before the people, the Pharisees cried out: "Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" They did not see that to reproach him with his former blindness as proof of his sins was first of all to acknowledge the truth of the miracle which they sought to deny. They violently drove him out of the Synagogue, waiting till later, perhaps, to demand his legal excommunication.

Jesus, Who had fled from the popular enthusiasm at the time of the miracle, was, nevertheless, mindful of the poor lamb healed by Him, but maltreated by His enemies. This man was a believer of a special class—in his soul he had faith in a Prophet, but he knew not who the Prophet was. Never having seen Him, and yet constituting himself His defender, at the risk of his personal comfort and even of his life, he deserved to meet Him, to know Him, and to have Him for his Teacher. Nascent faith, without a well-defined object to which it may attach itself, soon feels its glow becoming dim; it recoils upon itself and dies. Jesus makes no delay in seeking the mendicant, and, having found him, He says to him: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" In other words: "Hast thou faith in the mission of the Man Whom thou hast just defended before the Pharisees?" He understood it all, and, not even stopping to formulate an affirmative reply, he at once says: "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" The voice which he recognises, the strange question that is put to him, the interior grace that lifts up his soul, enliven him with hope and love. He awaits with impatience the word that is to come from the lips of his questioner, he divines it, and accepts it in advance. "Thou hast both seen Him," says Jesus, "and it is He that talketh with thee." And the man, falling prostrate in the attitude of an adorer,[14] speaks aloud this brief but energetic profession of faith: "I believe, Lord." Jesus then sums up the moral lesson which was the outcome of this incident, and adds: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind." Not that Providence has fatally decreed such a sentence, separating mankind into two parts, that of believers and that of the obstinate in error; but that

[14] In *St. John* the verb προσκυνεῖν is always understood as meaning the adoration rendered to God. Thus, iv, 20, and xii, 20.

mankind itself freely divides itself into two great families, one of which hearkens to the call of God, while the other follows the voice of its own passions. The ignorant, the little children, the people who know not the law, shall accept enthusiastically and gratefully the first rays of divine light, and shall issue thus from the dense darkness wherein the malice of centuries had imprisoned them. The wise, the intelligent, the proud, whose mouths open to say unceasingly: "We know," just as we have heard them but a moment ago, shall reject, proud of their incomplete or even entirely false doctrine, the divine manifestation of the truth, and they who were seers in the midst of the blind, shall become blind in the midst of seers.

This sentence was fulfilled in a terrible manner first in Israel, where the princes of science, shutting themselves up with their proud illusions, yielded the sceptre to a few poor Galileans whose humility transformed them into veritable sages. It was perpetuated then in the world, where Israel sat like a poor blind wretch, while all the Gentiles, born in darkness, advanced into full light. It is yet fulfilled every day among ourselves, when the humble mount up in their simple faith toward perfection in the moral life and to the reward of eternity, while the strong, puffed up by their knowledge, fall asleep amid the follies of the present life and tumble like blind men into the darkness of eternity.

Some Pharisees, who were near by, heard the foregoing words of Jesus and the mendicant and were offended. They asked Him ironically: "Are we also blind?" And Jesus, deeply pained, replied, in a tone that should have reached their souls: "If you were blind, you should not have sin." He regrets that they are not blind, either because their sin would have been removed, like that of all the blind whom He is to lead back to light, or because their

ignorance might have served as an excuse. "But now you say, We see. Your sin remaineth."

Pride, by the very fact that it pretends to possess and to see the truth, checks every effort to seek it or even to accept it when proposed. The most difficult disease to cure is certainly the disease of that man who will not believe that he is ill and refuses to be treated. In such conditions the infirmity becomes incurable, and the sin is the graver since the sinner had sufficient intelligence to discern its malice and its consequences.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRIST AND HIS FLOCK

Jesus Employs a Double Allegory: He Is the *Door* of the Fold and at the Same Time the *Good Shepherd* of the Flock—The Door Is for True Shepherds Who Come There to Call the Sheep—The Sheep Follow Them—Whosoever Enters by Any Other Way Is a Robber, and the Flock Heeds Him Not—The Good Shepherd Is Distinguished from the Mercenary by His Devotion to His Flock—The Two Flocks Which the Great Shepherd Is to Unite. (St. John x, 1–21.)

The brutal violence with which the Pharisees had treated the man born blind was but one of the least of the abuses of power to which this proud sect lent itself in its dealings with the common people. Nothing was better calculated to sadden the Master's soul than this woful spectacle of hypocrisy obtruding itself in the name of virtue, of false piety silencing every sentiment of toleration, of selfishness assuming the place of generous devotion. The Messianic characteristics, as set forth in Ezechiel and in Zacharias,[1] came before His mind. He compared the malice of the false shepherds of

[1] *Ezech.* xxxiv; *Zach.* xi.

Israel with the infinite kindness that He felt in His own heart, and this comparison of their usurped despotism and His legitimate mission inspired Him to draw a delightful similitude on the shepherd and his flock which St. John has preserved for us. It is indeed the indignant voice of divine charity that speaks. The tenderest comparisons, the liveliest images are employed to express the Master's thought in the most lovable language. It was probably late in the day, and it may be that the sight of the flocks returning from the fields by the road from Bethany, led by the shepherds beneath the walls of the city, if it had not inspired His thought, at least rendered His figures more lively in the eyes of His listeners. Jesus began with solemnity, saying: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber."

It is the beginning of an allegory.[2] To understand it well, we must remember that in the Orient the sheepfold is not a building entirely roofed and walled in like a house, but simply an enclosure surrounded with high palings or with a poorly built wall to protect the sheep from the teeth of wild beasts. In this are penned up several flocks, and one of the shepherds stays there, his duty being carefully to lock the door on the inside. He watches for the attacks of wolves or of marauders during the night. Early in the morning each shepherd comes in turn and raps on the door. He is admitted; he calls his flock together, and the flock, knowing his voice, follows him to the neighbouring pastures.

[2] An allegory differs from a parable in that it is not a complete story with its dénouement, but only an image which, without having any consistency, slightly glosses over the truth that is developed and brings out its principal points. As M. Godet well says, it is a transparency, whereas a parable is a tableau.

Jesus therefore likens the people of God to a flock of sheep. Jehovah, by the mouth of Ezechiel,[3] had promised to deliver His children from the tyranny of bad shepherds, saying: "And you, My flocks, the flocks of My pasture, are men, and I am the Lord your God." The enclosure or wall of the sheepfold is the spiritual boundary which, under different forms, separates strangers and enemies from the true children of the Kingdom. There is a gate that leads into the fold, namely, divine vocation. No shepherd can claim any portion of the sheep, unless he is chosen, authorised, sent by the Father of the family, the sole Master of the flock. He who comes unwelcomed by the Father, takes care not to present himself at the door; he would not be allowed to enter. He is therefore driven to employ craft or violence to penetrate the enclosing wall. Thus he forces himself into the midst of the flock and brings with him desolation and death. Such is the history of the Pharisees, who, by hypocrisy and daring, exercise their despotic authority over the people of God without having been delegated by the Master of the sheep. Having no divine mission—their works prove it sufficiently—they ravage the fold in the interests of their pride, their prejudices, and their selfishness. Their malice knows no limits. Not only do they eagerly sow the most detestable doctrines, but they multiply their calumnies in order to prevent Israel from reaching the truth. Did they not, only a moment ago, go so far as to hurl a threat of excommunication against any who should dare to obey the word of the only true Shepherd, and venture to live beneath His staff?

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; to him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice." The true shepherd openly announces his

[3] *Ezech.* xxxiv, 31.

coming; he knows his rights. The guardian of the fold knows him and gives him free passage. This guardian is God Himself, Who, in the words of Scripture,[4] opens to the Gentiles the door of faith and lets them enter; God to Whom it belongs to welcome and to recognise the workmen loyally desirous of pasturing the flock of the elect. This right of guarding the door can be delegated to those who will be charged with the direction of the Church. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they will watch attentively to see if the shepherd who presents himself bears the authentic marks of sincerity and goodness without which he may not pass, and, in the name of God, they will open the door to some because of their zeal and close it upon others because of their unworthiness. If the authorised representatives of the Synagogue had read the prophets intelligently, and if they had taken the true picture of the Messiah presented by them and compared it with Jesus, there is no doubt that the young Prophet of Nazareth would have seemed to them to be worthy of admittance within the fold. But, as they were unequal to their task and forgetful of their duty, God deputed John the Baptist,[5] the successor of the prophets and greater than any of them. He, the official porter of Judaism, knew the true Shepherd by the signs which the Holy Spirit had given, and, solemnly opening the door before Him, he introduced Him into the midst of Israel to select and to organise the new people of God.

Moreover, the Good Shepherd is known not only by the porter, but also by the sheep, who distinguish His voice. For the soul has received a special sense, as it were, for recognising the true Shepherd; it has an echo that replies at once to His words. "And He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out." For one to call

[4] *Acts* xiv, 26. [5] *St. John* i, 6 and 7.

another by his name proves that he knows him in his individuality and in his private life; it reminds him that he distinguishes him from others, and lets him know that he loves him or that he has loved him. This was the secret of the profound emotion that shook Magdalen, the lost lamb brought back to the fold, when Jesus called her by name on the morning of the Resurrection. In that name the Master had with a single word told the sinner's past life and His own mercy.

If the fold is Judaism, it is evident that Jesus has already begun to call His sheep to Him by name. Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, and all the disciples have heard His voice. Jesus has driven them out from the law of Moses, which has completed its allotted time, to guide them to the pastures of the Messianic Kingdom. This power of attraction in His voice is easily explained when we recall that as the Divine Word He enlightens every man here below.[6] Hence between Him and the human soul there is a prearranged harmony by which He is sure to be recognised at the first call.

"And when He hath let out His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, because they know His voice." In the fold He was behind them to urge them on, not wishing to neglect any. But, once outside, He goes ahead to guide them, to defend them against any danger, to find for them the best pastures. Jesus has done this by conducting His little flock, recently out from the narrow barriers of Judaism, along the broad ways of truth, of justice, and of heroism; by protecting against ravishing wolves those whom He has initiated into His life and shielded with His grace. "But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers." This is well for the triumph of the Gos-

[6] *St. John* i, 4, 9.

pel, since Pharisees are not lacking to lead the flock astray and to steal it from the true Shepherd. But as the voice of the enemy differs greatly from that of the Master, the flock, knowing it, is sure to turn a deaf ear and to let him call in vain.

His hearers, says the Evangelist, understood not the meaning of this similitude. Besides, it was to the interest of the majority of them not to inquire as to its application, since it was to them that it referred as robbers and brigands. Jesus took pains to explain its principal points by repeating it in a new and more complete form. He is the Door of the fold and the Good Shepherd, since He is Redeemer and King. In His sacrifice He has constituted Himself the Door by which every sinner must enter into the fold of the elect. By His teaching, His example, His grace ever active though secret, He is the Shepherd guiding His flock. It is only by identifying one's self with Him that one may become a child of God, and it is only by taking one's place beneath His staff that one may remain such.

"Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the Door of the sheep," says Jesus. No one, in the past, has truly become part of Israel but by Christ. The patriarchs, the prophets, and all the true sons of Abraham advanced by faith toward that Door which they hailed in future ages as their sole hope. The New Law shall know no other means of salvation. There never has been nor shall there ever be any other passage than this one leading to the Kingdom of God. "All others, as many as have come before Me," declares the Master,[7] "are thieves and rob-

[7] The Greek text, which has *πάντες ὅσοι ἦλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ*, has been singularly twisted about by commentators. It appears, at first glance, to be extremely severe, since it seems to say that all who have come before Jesus, even Moses and the prophets, were thieves and robbers. On this account several manuscripts, the *Sinaiticus* and others, have suppressed *πρὸ ἐμοῦ*, in

bers." Such were Judas the Gaulonite, or the Galilean, Sadoc the Pharisee, and many others, who played a disastrous part in Israel.[8] Such are, above all, the Pharisees, who have usurped a scandalous influence over the people, and whom He shall ere long indignantly reproach for having closed the door of the Heavenly Kingdom upon the sheep of Israel. But it is not enough for their pride to arrogate to themselves the rights of the Messiah, to set themselves up as the inevitable door of the Kingdom of Heaven by the monopoly of knowledge, of authority, of high liturgical functions; they are endeavouring, moreover, to suppress by violence the only true Door, as the unfaithful labourers contemplated killing the son of the master of the vineyard in order to receive his heritage and his prerogatives. "And the sheep heard them not." The man born blind has just given a proof of this. He has left the false shepherds, who seek to profit by the people, and has hurried to the true Shepherd to hail Him as Lord and Son of God. Following his example, the long-abused people should rid themselves of their deceivers. "I am the Door," says Jesus. "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in and go out and shall find pastures."

The faithful follower of Jesus is assured, in the highest

order to deprive the Manicheans of an argument that would tend to diminish the authority of the Old Testament. Some critics propose to assign to πρό the meaning of χωρίς, "separate from Me," or again that of ἀντί," in My place." (See Euripides, *Alcmene*, 466.) But the simplest way is to understand what is contained in the preceding verse, and to say: "All others, who have come *as Door*, before Me," etc.

[8] Josephus (*Antiq.*, xviii, 1) tells that after the banishment of Archelaus to Vienna (Quirinius having taken the census of Judea, henceforth a Roman province), Judas the Gaulonite, of the city of Gamala, joined with Sadoc the Pharisee and made an attempt to arouse the people in behalf of national liberty. They had many followers; in Judea they formed a fourth sect, whose spirit of political independence and respect for Pharisaical observances seem to have constituted their distinctive marks. They perished miserably after some awful struggles.

degree, of his personal dignity, his independence, and his life. "For," He adds, "the thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly." He has but one thought, that of securing peace for the flock in a safe resort, and abundant pastures when it is ready to be led out. The Pharisees, by their arts, have learned only to pillage it. They corrupt it by their false doctrines, their pride, and their cupidity, and they can only lead it fatally to eternal damnation. "I am the Good Shepherd," He says once more, fully conscious that He realises the ideal set up by the prophets. When, by the mouth of Ezechiel,[9] God promised to save His flock from the rapacity of false shepherds by raising up the true Shepherd, His servant David, it was of Him He thought. For Jesus the Son of Jehovah, the supreme Shepherd of Israel,[10] and of David the herdsman of the mountains, whom God made the glorious shepherd of His people,[11] has, in truth, every right to be the Shepherd *par excellence*, and none can contest this His prerogative as Messiah.

Besides, to prove that it is truly His, He has only to remind His hearers of the distinctive mark of the true shepherd, which is love for his flock even to the sacrifice of himself. "The Good Shepherd giveth[12] His life for His sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep; and the hireling flieth because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep." How easily recognisable, by these traits rapidly reviewed, are

[9] *Ezech.* xxxiv, 23. [10] *Ps.* xxii; *Isa.* xl, 10, etc. [11] *II Kings* vii, 8.
[12] In this expression there is evidently an allusion to those words of the prophecy of Isaias (lviii, 10) on the Saviour's passion: "If he lay down his life for sin," etc.

these chief-priests who, for so long, though not sharing in the vices or ambitions or superstitious practices of the Pharisees, yet by their weakness and neglect have allowed the flock of Israel to be devoured! Great in nothing, generous in nothing, with souls in no wise paternal, despite the legitimacy and the holiness of their mission they have come to believe that they are shepherds not for the sheep, but for themselves. Essentially selfish, they seek above all else their human interests. How bright, on the contrary, shines upon Jesus' brow that characteristic sign of the Good Shepherd, devoted love! "I know Mine," He says, "and Mine know Me; as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father." What intimacy in the relations between the Shepherd and His sheep! They are like[13] those that unite the Father and the Son. Hence nothing is too dear for one who loves and knows himself to be loved in such manner. "And I lay down My life for My sheep." What heroism! Jesus consents not only to feed His sheep with His word, but to defend them against the ravenous wolf; and since a sacrifice is demanded to redeem them in solemn expiation, He offers Himself to satiate the hatred of the enemy. From His death He sees issuing the salvation of the world, and that is sufficient to impel Him joyfully to the sacrifice.

By a natural transition, the thought of sacrifice then takes hold upon the Saviour's soul, and He contemplates with pleasure its consoling results. "And other sheep I have," He says, "that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." Israel was the first called, but not the only one, and, besides Israel, there wanders an immense flock looking for a shepherd. It is the flock of

[13] They are of the same order, the same nature, not simply comparable. The text has καθώς, not ὥσπερ.

the Gentiles. Instinctively they seek the true God and true justice. The Word enlightens every man that comes into the world, and leads him toward revelation. If all mankind does not enter within the fold it is certain, nevertheless, that all were invited there. Hence at the Shepherd's first loving call, all men of goodwill shall know His voice, for they have long awaited this supreme summons. A sign, that of the cross, shall suffice to gather them in a single flock. Then they shall come, notwithstanding past hostilities, in the Psalmist's [14] words, to join hands on Mount Sion, declaring that they are the Lord's,[15] all together speaking the language of Chanaan,[16] and emulating one another in the repetition of the words: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His path; for the law shall go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord out of Jersualem." [17] According to another saying of the Saviour Himself, they "shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." [18] "There shall be but one flock and one Shepherd." [19]

In view of the salvation that Jesus is preparing for mankind by His expiation, and of the divine glory that shall result therefrom, the Father loves the Son, as the master loves the workman who devotes himself to the task which he was free to decline. For it would be a mistake to think that the Good Shepherd was fatally doomed to become the victim of devouring wolves. No; if He dies, it is because He wills it. No one shall take His life; He will give it Himself in His own time, according to His

[14] *Ps.* xxxvi. [15] *Isa.* xliv, 5. [16] *Ibid.*, xix, 18.
[17] *Mich.* iv, 2. [18] *St. Matt.* viii, 11.
[19] This thesis is finely developed by St. Paul, *Ephes.* ii, 11–22.

own good pleasure; and, the better to prove that He alone is Master of His existence, He shall again resume it after having sacrificed it. He will die because He knows the desires of His Father and the demands of eternal justice. He will rise again in obedience once more to the divine decree that requires in His glorification the completion of the work of Redemption. For this work ends not at His death, it continues throughout the ages. That is why Jesus follows the will of the Father in His resurrection as well as in His death. "Therefore doth My Father love Me," He concludes, "because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father." So, then, it is vain for the Pharisees to wish to make Him the sport of their fury. He alone is Master of Himself, under the loving eye of the Father Who sent Him.

These words, which for some were very obscure, for others very aggressive, and which only a few received with satisfaction, again divided the multitude into two factions. Again the most conflicting judgments were formed. Many exclaimed: "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear you Him?" Others, calmer, replied: "These are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

Jesus left them to discuss His words and His works, and prepared to quit the Holy City for the present.

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS RETURNS INTO GALILEE

WHY IT IS PROBABLE THAT JESUS, AFTER THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, RETURNED AT ONCE INTO GALILEE—HIS TASK THERE, AND WHAT NECESSITATED HIS ABSENCE FROM JERUSALEM—DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS AT CAPHARNAUM.

IF the brethren of Jesus had followed the intricacies of the struggle which had just begun in Jerusalem, they must have thought that at last their relative had manifested Himself to the world in a manner probably exceeding their fondest desires. What He had so long forbidden even to be whispered in Galilee, that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, He had now declared in the most distinct terms before the hierarchical party. Hence the terrible storm which had gathered above His head, and out of which, it was easy to see, would shortly come some great and dire catastrophe. Scribes, Pharisees, Elders of the people, Chief-Priests, the Sanhedrim, all had risen up against the young Prophet of Nazareth Whose blasphemous claims went so far as to declare Him to be the Christ. For, after all, to call Himself the Shepherd of Israel, the Light of the world, the Fountain of living water springing up to quench the thirst, and cleanse the stains of humanity; to

cry out, "I am *He*, and he who believeth not in Me, shall not have life in him," was plain enough to those who cared to understand. Hardly did those few simple souls—whom the healing of the blind man and the sublime discourses which followed had drawn to admiration without understanding—dare to take sides with Him against Whom the great majority inveighed and Whom they wished to suppress. These few partisans, nearly all strangers in Jerusalem, were less sceptical and excitable than the inhabitants of the Holy City. Galileans for the most part, they were instinctively inclined to defend their compatriot. But they could not remain long in Judea once the Pasch was over. Jesus, knowing that with them would disappear the last human element that protected Him against His enemies, hastened to set out on His return journey to Capharnaum, where the hour in which His supreme resolve was to be taken, seemed to have struck. St. John, it is true, does not mention this return to Galilee, but here, no more than elsewhere, the silence of this Evangelist need offer no real difficulty. The rapidity, the suddenness, the mystery, which, according to him, characterised the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, clearly showed that the Master had not left the shores of the lake definitively, and that He would return thither, after a brief delay, to prepare for His final and official departure. And since Galilee was His own country, His home, now that He had to leave Jerusalem, after His public manifestation, would He not naturally take refuge there? The Evangelist supposes it to be so natural that, when Jesus does not return to Galilee after the feast of the Dedication, he makes note of it. Making Him then return beyond the Jordan, he shows that He had been there previously. But He was there precisely because He had left Galilee to evangelise, in passing, the whole country, toward Judea, by the ordinary route

of Peræa.[1] In all probability, Jesus' return, like His departure, took place without any important stops or any attempt to evangelise the people by the way. The Master, having openly accepted the battle, could not but be impatient to pursue the struggle, by placing Himself once more at the head of His followers. Not that He considered His disciples as yet fitted for a serious engagement—He knew

[1] In previous editions we have identified the journey of Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles with His final departure from Galilee, supposing, in common with many other exegetes, that, after the feast, Jesus had remained in Judea, not in Jerusalem, where the hatred of His enemies might have served Him some bad turn, but with friends either at Bethany or in Peræa. From there He could have come for the second time into the Holy City, at the feast of the Dedication, and then return to where He had been before (ἀπῆλθεν πάλιν πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου), and continue His ministry until the resurrection of Lazarus. Then came the retreat to Ephrem, until the moment when, rejoining the Galilean caravans, He went up with them to the Passover—to die. Subsequent reflection on this difficult question of concordance has led us to change our former opinion. It seems, in truth, impossible to look upon as one and the same event the journey spoken of in *St. John* vii, 10, and that in *St. Luke* ix, 51, the only one mentioned by the Synoptics. Whereas in *St. John* the journey was, so to speak, undertaken and made in such haste and so secretly (οὐ φανερῶς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ), that Jesus appeared suddenly in the midst of the feast, that mentioned by St. Luke seems to have been arranged with a certain solemnity; *He sets His face*, looking at the sacrifice to which He advances; He sends messengers ahead to prepare His way (ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλους πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ); He organises the seventy disciples (x, 1), evangelises the towns and villages, draws multitudes after Him (xiv, 25). We conclude, therefore, that the journey of Jesus to the feast of Tabernacles is not the one spoken of by St. Luke and the other Synoptics. There still remain the journey made on the occasion of the feast of the Dedication and that of the Passover. That of the feast of the Dedication is spoken of in *St. John* x, 22, as a mere incident, Jesus probably being at the gates of Jerusalem at that time. It bears no resemblance to what is said in *St. Luke* ix, 51 *et seq.* Finally, to admit that, in this passage of St. Luke, there is question of a journey later than that of the Dedication and consequently later than that which was shortly to lead Jesus to the fatal Passover, would be to compress within too short a period those events which occupy eight chapters of *St. Luke's Gospel*, not to speak of *St. John* xi.

To enable us to prolong the too short interval between the payment of the tribute and the Paschal week, we have, it is true, the hypothesis of a *ve'-Adar* or second month of *Adar*, occurring every three years. But we must not omit to remark that in supposing this happy coincidence to have taken place in the last year of Jesus's ministry, it will then follow that the payment of the tribute was retarded by that very fact and, falling in *ve'-Adar*, would be closer than ever to the feast of the Passover. Thus the expedient of this

them to be weak and pusillanimous—but He would accustom them by degrees to fix their eyes on the scene of the final combat, and at the same time close, by a last apostolic campaign, embracing all the countries not yet evangelised in Palestine, His Messianic ministry.

He therefore went back to Capharnaum, preceded by

extra month is of no avail. Besides it is very difficult to prove positively that the tax demanded from Jesus was not the civil tax, which was paid at the end of the civil year, before the feast of Tabernacles, and more difficult still to deny that those in arrears were not usually obliged to pay the Temple taxes on the eve of the three great feasts of the year. The inconvenience of this chronology being as evident as the insufficiency of its proofs, we prefer to identify the journey spoken of by St. Luke and the other Synoptics with the time of the feast of Tabernacles, which it ought to follow, not with the feast of the Dedication, which it ought to precede and include. If it is not mentioned by St. John, it is to be understood from what passed at the feast of Tabernacles. In reality, it must have been the last journey made by Jesus, for He never again returned to Galilee. But this journey must have been prolonged so as to admit of delays, missions, and even one appearance at a feast in Jerusalem. This appearance is categorically stated in *St. John* x, 22, and appears quite natural by the involuntary indication in *St. Luke* x, 38, who, in relating the story of the journey, suddenly shows us the Master at the gates of Jerusalem receiving hospitality in Bethany.

The agreement of St. John and St. Luke seems therefore, to us, to be established, by placing the departure related by the latter and the two other Synoptics, soon *after* the feast of Tabernacles and *before* the feast of the Dedication. It is a journey which St. John presupposes, since it was the decisive journey, but which he does not mention.

Jesus, after the uproar in the Holy City, where probably the whole number of His disciples had not followed Him, returned to Capharnaum to prepare for His final departure. We need not be surprised at the silence of St. John respecting this return; these disconcerting omissions are frequent on his part. Thus at the end of ch. v he does not remark that Jesus returned to Galilee, and nevertheless at the beginning of ch. vi he speaks of Him as crossing the Lake of Tiberias. We may, however, observe that he gives us one useful indication, when he tells us that after the Dedication Jesus *returned* "beyond the Jordan." The words ἀπῆλθεν πάλιν certainly refer to a recent sojourn in Peræa, and not to the time of His baptism. It was therefore from that place that He came. But it is to this very same place that, after His departure from Galilee, the Synoptics say He went (*St. Mark* x, 1; *St. Matt.* xix, 1). The harmony of this combination permits us to follow almost wholly the order of St. Luke. We have only to interpolate, at the time of His visit to Martha and Mary, Jesus' momentary appearance at the feast of the Dedication, when He resumes the struggle begun at the feast of Tabernacles. He returns, after a more or less protracted stay at Bethany, to Peræa, where He continues His ministry until the resurrection of Lazarus. The rest follows without difficulty.

the report of His triumphant and reiterated declarations not only in Jerusalem, but in the Temple itself, in the hearing and before the eyes of His adversaries burning with rage, but powerless to undertake any plan of action against Him.

The pride of the Galileans must have been flattered, and if some were timid and looked with fear upon the future of the Prophet Whom they loved, still there is nothing to hinder the belief that many among them sustained their courage mutually together with their sacred hopes. At any rate, we shall see that as He started He was accompanied not by simple well-wishers, but by a devoted and determined band of followers.

Section II

Jesus with His Little Church Leaves Galilee in View of the Final Struggle

CHAPTER I

SOLEMN DEPARTURE FROM CAPHARNAUM

Resolute Attitude of Jesus as He Advances to the Struggle—Sad Farewell to the Faithless Cities of Galilee—A Town in Samaria Refuses Him Hospitality—Indignation of the *Sons of Thunder*—The Spirit of the Gospel—Three Candidates for the Apostolate—The One Must Pause for Thought—Another Must Advance Without Delay—Having Once Begun, No One Must Look Back. (St. Luke ix, 51–62; St. Matthew viii, 19–22; xi, 20–24.)

The situation was grave, and St. Luke[1] is right in emphasising the dramatic phase of the resolution which Jesus then formed. The end of His ministry and even

[1] The entire verse in *St. Luke* ix, 51, reveals the Aramean source from which the Evangelist derived his information. Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας indicates, with intentional solemnity, the fulfilment of a period which will end, as it were, fatally, with the *removal* of Jesus, τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ, that is, with His *departure*, for God awaits Him at the close of these ap-

of His life appearing imminent—what He had seen and heard in Jerusalem no longer permitted Him to doubt it —it is said that He "steadfastly set His face" to meet bravely the attack by which He would be cut off from the number of the living and raised up in glory.

His disciples, admiring His heroism, made ready to imitate Him in this, and we shall soon see that their enthusiasm was great enough to appeal to their power as *thaumaturgi* even at the expense of charity. The little Church, therefore, gathered around its head. The pious women of Galilee wished to have their place therein.[2] The words of St. Matthew and St. Mark,[3] which would seem to indicate a general emotion among the people at the departure of Jesus and His followers, ought, perhaps, to be understood as referring to the multitudes that followed them in Peræa.

At any rate, when He was on the point of leaving the shores of the lake, Jesus' heart was filled with sadness. This was quite legitimate. Although He had gathered among the mountains of Galilee the nucleus of the Church which He took with Him, He left the vast majority of the people there still unconvinced of His Messianic character, and His enemies were more audacious than ever. So that after so many prodigious achievements, after spreading so much light and exercising so much mercy, His religious labours seemed to be generally incomplete, assailed, and even compromised in those regions. It was at this

pointed days. He will remove Him once more from earth, to which He had wished only to lend Him. The other explanations of ἀνάληψις are unnatural. Jesus's death, above all, is referred to here. That is why the Evangelist adds πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν, plainly a translation of a Hebrew phrase frequently employed in the Old Testament. (*Jer.* xxi, 10; xlii, 15; xliv, 12; *Ezech.* vi, 2; *Daniel* xi, 17, etc.) "His face was of one going to Jerusalem."

[2] We shall find them mentioned again in the last scene of the Passion (*St. Luke* xxiii, 55).

[3] *St. Matt.* xix, 2, and *St. Mark* x, 1.

moment, no doubt,[4] that, shaking the dust from His feet, with one last glance along the shores of the lake, where He had spent so many happy hours, He spoke this sad farewell to the faithless cities of Galilee: "Woe to thee, Corozain, and woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." And then, with livelier indignation—the ingratitude of friends is more cutting than that of strangers—He addressed His mother-city, which He was leaving forever: "And thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to hell." The greater the effort God makes to bind unto Himself a faithless society, the more severe He becomes in His abandonment of it. What city of Palestine had been more favoured than Capharnaum, which had become the second home of Jesus and the usual scene of His divine works? Alas! the greater her privileges, the greater her chastisement, and her final annihilation shall be in direct proportion to her former exaltation. "For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

The caravan was large. Jesus despatched messengers ahead to announce its coming and to make sure of decent hospitality.[5] They had, doubtless, already passed by the

[4] In *St. Matt.* xi, 20–23, these words of Jesus come at a time when as yet there seems to be no reason for their severity, the ministry in Galilee not being so near its end. In *St. Luke* x, 13, they come too late. The Master uttered them probably at the very moment when He quitted the shores of the lake.

[5] The text is explicit: ὥστε ἑτοιμάσαι αὐτῷ (*St. Luke* ix, 52).

Galilean cities of the plain of Esdrelon, when they came to the frontier towns of Samaria. One of these cities into which the messengers had made their way—Ginea, it is thought, at the present time Djenin, perhaps because Josephus [6] says that it was a frontier town of northern Samaria—refused to receive them. They had allowed it to be known [7] that they were pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. The text [8] seems to say that Jesus Himself arrived in time to encounter this refusal.

The disciples were terribly scandalised. They were the advance guard in the Messiah's triumphal march; filled with patriotic illusions, they already beheld the entire country rising up to acclaim the theocratic King, and here an ill-conditioned village of Samaria dared to close its gates upon Him! This was an altogether outrageous proceeding. For believers who already saw, beyond the limits of time, the gates of heaven, according to the prophetic apostrophe of the Psalmist, lifted up by the strength of angels to admit the King of Glory,[9] could there be anything more revolting than the attitude of these miserable Samaritans who refused the divine Conqueror admission into their town? "Lord," cried out James and John, humiliated at having to endure so cutting a refusal in the name of Jesus, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" The memory of Sodom [10] evoked by the last words of Jesus on His departure from Capharnaum, or perhaps of Elias, who had appeared at the Transfiguration, and whom they so ardently desired to see living again, haunted their minds. Why not punish the inhospitality of the Samaritans, as the

[6] *B. J.*, iii, 3, 4.

[7] The expression *ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον*, "His face was of one going to Jerusalem" (cf. *Exod.* xxxiii, 14; *II Kings* xvii, 11), betrays the Aramean origin of St. Luke's document.

[8] It says *καὶ οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν.* [9] *Ps.* xxiii, 7. [10] *Gen.* xix.

two Angels of the Lord had chastised that of Sodom? The terrible Thesbite,[11] were he there, would not fail to draw down fire from heaven upon the enemies of Jehovah. Why not prove before the eyes of all that the power of God is with the young Church, and that the fire of His wrath will consume any who persist in impeding her development? This proposal was worthy of the two ardent disciples to whom Jesus had already given the surname *Sons of Thunder,* amid circumstances of which we are ignorant. Far from sharing their violent indignation, the Master, Who had placed Himself once more at the head of the caravan to resume the journey, turned quickly upon them and in a voice of unusual severity said: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save."[12] The spirit of the New Testament is, above all, a spirit of gentleness, of charity, and of patience. To renew the severity of the Old Covenant at this time were to be deceived as to date and to mistake the distinctive character of the Christian Kingdom. It is true that the Church, in order to protect herself against falsehood and corruption, will, at times, employ severity against those who are consciously and obstinately wicked. Thus, she will strike Ananias, Saphira, Elymas, the incestuous man of Corinth; but this is not her ordinary method of government and of triumph. Against infidels and against the ignorant who refuse her ministrations without a thought of her mission, as the Samaritans do here, she raises no other arms than mildness, forbearance, and mercy.

[11] *IV Kings* i, 10, 12.

[12] According to another interpretation the terms of this rebuke, which, indeed, the principal manuscripts ℵ, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D* omit, were even more severe: "You know not what spirit now dictates your words." As if He meant that, in speaking thus, they had been inspired by Satan. The word which the Evangelist uses, ἐπετίμησεν, indicates that it was a severe lesson.

He therefore Who had pronounced a malediction upon the Pharisees and the unfaithful Galilean cities had nothing harsh to say to the inhabitants of this humble village. Resignedly He pursued His way and looked for a town that would be less inhospitable. This did not prevent the popular movement from pronouncing, nearly everywhere along the way, in favour of the youthful Messiah. He received even spontaneous offers of more or less disinterested devotion. Thus one day a Scribe, a rather unusual recruit, presented himself. The enthusiasm of the disciples had won him over, and, sharing their hopes, he wished to be associated with them in their fortunes. "Master," he said, "I will follow Thee, whithersoever Thou shalt go." Was this new proselyte presuming too much on his own strength, or did he permit himself to be guided in his homage by human views? Jesus' reply does not answer this. Neither accepting nor rejecting his offer, the Master invites him to reflect in order that he may not be mistaken as to the consequences of his perhaps too sudden resolution. If he thinks to find among the Apostolic group consideration and comfort, he is deceived, for he must expect, above all, the practice of self-denial and sacrifice. "The foxes have holes," said Jesus, "and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." This response, tinged with profound sadness,[13] alluded to the refusal of hospitality which He had just received, and revealed without any evasion all the precariousness, the humiliation, and the severity that was henceforth to mark the life of the labourers of the Gospel. Later on, even the Apostles' condition shall be no better. Not knowing in the morning where they shall repose for the night,

[13] There is no doubt that this incident of the Scribe soliciting the Apostleship is better placed here, according to St. Luke's account, than in *St. Matt.* viii, 19.

these valiant champions of truth shall behold themselves condemned to wander at random, without refuge, but not without persecutors. Their lot shall seem more wretched than that of the wild beast. Such is the future. The proselyte must needs foresee it well before he braves it. The Sacred Text does not relate at what decision the Scribe arrived, or whether the Master's response by its harshness destroyed or strengthened his good resolutions.

To another neophyte, who appears to have manifested his desire of the Apostleship less ardently, but who, perhaps, presented more sincere guarantees of perseverance, Jesus said, "Follow Me!" This man, of a reflecting, prudent nature, felt himself withheld by family ties. A heart thus trammelled rarely becomes capable of heroic generosity. He replied: "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Not that his father was as yet really dead—so great a grief would not have afforded him the time to come and hear or see Jesus on that day [14]—but his father was aged or perhaps dying, and the young man desired the consolation of closing his eyes. Jesus says: "Let the dead bury the dead; but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." Grace suffers no delay. To hesitate and to postpone the sacrifice is most frequently to risk never accomplishing it. There is the danger that the voice of heaven may become less urgent, the circumstances may be modified, and the opportunity lost. When Jesus passes, when He calls, we must follow Him; afterward it will be too late. To bury a father is, no doubt, a sacred duty, still we can imagine a duty yet more sacred. Necessity takes precedence of propriety. The son who does not let the enemy go, even when he sees his father fall on the field

[14] This observation is the better founded since the body was never kept for more than a day in the house of the dead. (*St. Matt.* ix, 23; *Acts* v, 7, 10, etc.)

of battle, puts his country above his father, and rightly so. To establish the Church, to glorify God, to save souls, is even more necessary and more admirable than to bury one's parents. That is what Jesus means to have us understand. Did not the law deny the High Priest and the Nazarites the consolation of paying their last respects [15] even to their most cherished dead solely for the sake of keeping them free from legal impurity? But here the motive is more urgently grave, for the grace of the Apostolate is at stake. It is evident, in fact, that even were the aged father dying at that moment, the son, after having gone to his burial, would be impure for seven days,[16] and unable to come to Jesus; but a week is equivalent to a year at the present time. In seven days Jesus will be far away; in seven days all the emotions of grief will have passed from the soul of the disciple and will have left it calm again; in seven days other proselytes will have taken his place. Let the dead bury the dead—such are they who live beyond the way of salvation—and let common souls pay thought to the vulgar things of life. The true disciple of Jesus has but one thought, but one ambition: to spread the light of the Gospel and to glorify God. The dead must not detain those who have received the mission of sowing the seed of life.

A third disciple presented himself with almost as much generosity as the first, but with a request for a respite like the second. The delay will be brief: merely to go to his home, to take leave of his family, to put his affairs in order, and then return immediately. "No man," says the Master, "putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." For the ploughman, in turning for a moment, loses sight of his goal; if he divides his attention, he lets the team go astray, and

[15] *Levit.* xxi, 11; *Numb.* vi, 6–7. [16] *Numb.* xix, 11–22.

retards the work, instead of advancing it. Every work that is undertaken amid other preoccupations is done in disorder and tardily. But the founding of the Kingdom of Heaven must be done well and quickly. The workmen who would establish it, impelled by a burst of heroism, like the soldier rushing to arms, will march on heedless of those who dare to cry out after them to remain in peace at home, and care for their own interests by living for the happiness of their children. God has pointed out the position they are to occupy in the terrible assault which the Gospel is to make against the corruption of mankind. They must no longer look back; their duty is to go ahead.

With such incidents on the way, wherein the disciples learned to know the grandeur and the generosity of the Apostolic vocation, they had probably reached the banks of the Jordan, on the frontier of Peræa, the Jewish province which Jesus intended to evangelise before bringing His Apostolic ministry to a close.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES

The Time Is Short, the Labourers Must Be Multiplied — The Great Apostolic Campaign of the Seventy Disciples—The Instructions Which They Receive, Some Identical with Those Given to the Apostles, Others for Them Alone — Success of This Mission—The Disciples Return Triumphant —The Words of Jesus—Expressions of Joy and Love for the Father. (St. Luke x, 1–24; St. Matthew xi, 25–30.)

Before entering, as missionary, this country which He had often traversed as pilgrim, the Master regarded it with love and compassion. There were many sons of Israel lost among these rugged mountains of Galaad, or amid the pagan populations of the great cities of Gadara, Gerasa, and Philadelphia. They must have seemed to deserve the greater attention, since they lived for the most part beyond the reach of the religious parties of Jerusalem. These were new and fruitful lands that the disciples were about to enter. Jesus, showing them to His disciples, said: "The harvest, indeed, is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He

send labourers into His harvest." And, Master Himself in His Father's house, He at once multiplies the labourers. To the twelve Apostles He joins seventy disciples.[1] This number was symbolical. It had played a great part in Jewish history. When the family of Jacob arrived in Egypt, it numbered seventy souls;[2] Moses had fixed the number of the ancients in Israel at seventy;[3] the Sanhedrim was composed of seventy judges, and, in the opinion of the Jews, mankind was divided into seventy different peoples. It was on the frontiers of paganism that the new army was going to operate. The Twelve had been chosen for Israel, the Seventy for the entire world.

Like the Apostles, the disciples were to depart two by two, the heralds of the Good-Tidings, to proclaim in all parts that the hour for the religious awakening had struck, and that the Messiah-King was come. "Go!" the Master says to them. "Behold I send you as lambs among wolves." The gentleness of the lamb well befits the preachers of the Gospel. Presenting themselves without defence, with pretensions timid, almost, in their humility, they shall thus triumph over the fury of the wolves.

As for material worries, they must have none. "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes." God charges Himself to provide for their needs. "Salute no man by the way." This would be a useless waste of precious time.[4]

[1] According to some manuscripts, we should have to read it *seventy-two*, and it is remarkable that in Jewish history we find this divergency with regard to the same number more than once. Thus it is thought that, according to *Genesis*, there were seventy-two peoples and not seventy; that the ancients of Israel were seventy-two, as if they could thus be more easily divided among the twelve tribes; that there were seventy-two Alexandrian translators instead of seventy. Nevertheless in the quotation in question, as in the others, the reading *seventy* seems the best authorised.

[2] *Gen.* xlvi, 27.

[3] *Numb.* xi, 16–25.

[4] Salutations in the East are very complicated, and the inflections of the body and the embraces which they exact would have been a loss of time in an hour when every minute had its value.

The Good-Tidings which they bear must hasten their steps, until the moment when they shall deposit the precious treasure in a safe place. Thus, long before, had Giezi, the servant of Eliseus,[5] received the command to travel in haste, and, stopping to salute no man, to lay the prophet's staff upon the lips of the Sunamitess' child. Eliseus was to come later on to complete the cure. Like the Apostles, whose mission they repeat exactly, although in a lower sphere, the disciples must, on entering a house, begin by wishing peace to those who dwell therein; for it is indeed peace that they bring to anxious and troubled souls. If there be there a son of peace, that is, a man who seeks and merits truth, the missionary's wish shall go straight to him and produce its fruit; if not, it shall return to him who spoke it, and shall soon afterward fall like a blessing doubly rich on others who shall be more worthy.

Just as the Apostles, the disciples may lodge in the house in which they shall have been favourably received, eating and drinking what has been given them, easy to be satisfied, but also without false shame. Is not the labourer worthy of his hire? And does not he who brings the bread of the soul merit the gift that nourishes the body? As it was forbidden to the Twelve, so it is again to the Seventy to go from house to house; for it might be suspected that they were in search of luxurious repasts. They must accept the hospitality offered them, without rendering it burdensome to those who furnish it, a detestable thing in a labourer of the Gospel. Instead of attending to details insignificant in a life such as his, the disciple shall devote himself wholly to the duties of his ministry. The healing of the sick shall be his first care, as it had been the Apostles'. Like them again, they are all to prove by miracles the legitimacy of their mission and the truth of

[5] *IV Kings* iv, 29.

what they proclaim. "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." This shall be their unceasing cry. At these words the true Israel shall rouse itself to hasten to the Messiah-King.

Should any city refuse them hospitality and reject their services, let them proceed to the public square, and, shaking the dust from their shoes, let them say: "Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us we wipe off against you. Yet know this, that the Kingdom of God is at hand." Woe to the citizens who shall have thus refused the Gospel! On the day of the Lord they shall be more terribly chastised than they of Sodom and Gomorrha; for the latter went astray when night hung over the world, whereas the former were obstinate in spite of and against the light that shone.

Whether hostility be open or disguised, the messengers of God must not forget that they ought to be "wise as serpents and simple as doves." [6] Bearers, yet few in number, of the Good-Tidings, it would be imprudent in them to expose themselves to death. The hour for martyrdom must come, but it will be later on. "And when they shall persecute you in this city," the Master adds, "flee into another. Amen, I say to you, ye shall not finish all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come." He will follow His envoys, and comfort them when they are unhappy. They must, however, expect all kinds of trials, calumnies, betrayals, and evil treatment. "The disciple is not above the Master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Good-

[6] We have tried to make a different classification of several fragments which have been introduced by St. Matthew into the discourse addressed to the Apostles at the time of their mission, and which should be transferred to more critical periods than those of the Galilean ministry.

man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household!" They must act, preach, spread the light, or stand aside.

Again, if Israel evinces an unconquerable repulsion for the Good-Tidings, they have only to turn to the left or to the right. Samaria and the pagan cities of Pentapolis are not closed to the disciples, as they had been to the Apostles.[7] The Kingdom of God can and must pass beyond Israel, and go to find new subjects throughout the world. What the Master desires at this solemn moment is to inaugurate the universal preaching of religious truth. He cannot be everywhere Himself; but each one, on learning that He is passing near, can come to meet Him on His way. As a last word of encouragement and a consoling benediction, He adds these words: "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me. And he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." The new disciples possess, therefore, like the Apostles, the word, the authority, the very majesty of God. That is why God is their protection.

The Gospel does not say how long this mission of the seventy disciples lasted. It may have been prolonged many days, for in all probability these emissaries passed through all the country as far as the ford of Jericho. Jesus followed them closely. It is certain that when they rejoined the Master, the disciples were more satisfied than the Apostles. "Lord," they said, transported with innocent joy, "the devils also are subject to us in Thy name." These words suggest that they had succeeded in healing the sick, but that this seemed to them but little in comparison with the power which they had exercised over the demons themselves! So happy a result, compared with

[7] It is remarkable that Jesus does not set any limits to the ground of the disciples' Apostolate, as He had done for that of the Apostles (*St. Matt.* x, 5).

the relative failure which in other days the Twelve had experienced, filled them with delight. Jesus let them see that He shared in their happiness by solemnly proving their success.

"I saw Satan," He said, "like lightning falling from heaven." Though far from the conflict, He followed it with His eye and directed it with His invisible influence. The attack was made on Satan with vigour, and the usurper of divine glory, he who had substituted himself for the true Master in the empire of souls, had just been struck to death. The meteor, which, for a time deceiving our eyes, wavers and falls suddenly to the horizon, vanishes not more miserably than the power of Satan. As the disciples have delivered the possessed from his rule, so shall they soon free the pagan world, that great demoniac groaning in slavery. The defeat has begun. Before the preaching of the Apostles and of the disciples, their auxiliaries, idolatry shall fall. Satan, blinded by the light of the Gospel, feels himself already cast down from the lofty throne upon which his pride had seized. Jesus, while contemplating his fall of to-day, lets His eye rest above all upon that of the morrow.

"Behold, I have given you," He adds, "power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you." Is there in this declaration of the Master an allusion to the promise made by God to Adam's posterity? It is possible; and, like Jesus, the wonderful offspring of the new Eve, the Apostles, too, shall crush the head of the serpent. In vain shall the demon summon all his forces: the craft of heretics, the violence of persecutors, the venom of calumny and of hate; the disciples of Jesus shall be stronger than this conspiracy of the infernal powers, and, despite the fury of the demons, they shall people the Church and shall

maintain her great and beautiful for the glory of her Founder.

"But yet," adds the Saviour in the solemn tone of the Master giving an important lesson, "rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven." [8] For the power of doing miracles, if it is a guarantee of truth of doctrine and of authority in behalf of the thaumaturgus, would not be an irrefragable proof of individual sanctity. One may achieve wonders and not save his soul, as the Saviour says on another occasion. Instead of yielding to vanity because of their power, the essential thing is, then, for the disciples to work with energy for their own sanctification, lest, after having converted others, they themselves, alas, may turn out to be only miserable reprobates. The possession of special authority in the Church on earth were little, indeed, if one should not be later on of the Church in heaven, and the glory of achieving something here below is nothing if we lose the right of citizenship above. At the same time, Jesus' soul, full of consolation and hope, abandoned itself to a joy, the sweet expression of which reminds us of His final discourse at the Last Supper.[9]

"I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," He exclaimed, "because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them

[8] An image commonly employed in Holy Scripture is that of the *Book of Life* in which God inscribes or erases the names of those who are to share in salvation or be excluded therefrom: *Exod.* xxxii, 32; *Ps.* lxviii, 29; *Isa.* iv, 3; *Jerem.* xvii, 13; *Philipp.* iv, 3; *Apoc.* iii, 5, and the allusion in *St. Matt.* v, 12.

[9] Nothing is more striking than the resemblance between the discourse by Jesus given here by St. Matthew and St. Luke, and those which we read in St. John. For compilations, usually so different in other respects, to agree so thoroughly when they depict the Master's soul, the supreme ideal of sanctity and light, it is necessary that both be inspired by the most exact truth.

to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight." [10] The divine plan shows, and most remarkably so, that its Author has excluded from the struggle against darkness all that might have been able to lend the aid of real strength, the learned, the wise, the teachers of Israel. These seers have had no vision; they have remained in the enemy's camp. The ignorant, the unknown, and a few of the great, who have laid aside their science and their pretensions in order to become as little children, alone have been called to learn the truth and to defend it. This proves that God alone can effect the transformation of the world; and Jesus is pleased to do homage to His omnipotence, while He adores the secret designs of His eternal wisdom, in which He acquiesces with His whole heart. After this flight of love and joy toward the Father, His expression of gratitude gives way to a calmer meditation which expresses admiration. "All things are delivered to Me by My Father," He says, "and no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal Him." As Son, He is the depositary of all that the Father is, all that the Father can and wills. What is it to be Son if it be not to reproduce the complete life of the Father? Therefore, from this natural relation rises the perfect knowledge which the Father and Son have of each other. The Father, knowing Himself, knows the Son, Who is His perfect likeness; and the Son, in turn, knowing Himself, knows the Father, Whose perfect and infinite reproduction He is.

This divine science, which the Son has, as God, from all eternity and by His essence, He also has, as Man, by communication, and He alone among creatures has a right

[10] Here we find another Hebraism, *εὐδοκία ἔμπροσθέν σου*, which denotes an Aramean document. (Comp. *Exod.* xxviii, 38.)

to it, because He alone has in Him the divine nature hypostatically united with human nature. But He may dispense this knowledge, received in all its plenitude from on high, to whom He will and in what measure He will. Such is the triumph of His generosity, the work of His mercy, and the object of His mission. Poor mistaken lives, souls tortured by doubt, hearts broken by suffering, the Master has a thought for them all.

"Come to Me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart: And ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is sweet and My burden light." It is a touching call that for ages has aroused, attracted, and caused innumerable generations of just men to put forth the fine flower of virtue. Jesus has received from His Father all that is needed for the consolation of His friends: truth to dispel uncertainty, law to regulate the will without erecting any useless obstacles, grace to aid the movement of the new life. He seeks only to distribute these many treasures. His heart contains no repellent arrogance; it is full of that amiable simplicity that welcomes every one sweetly and tenderly. Therefore, as His commandments exact nothing too great, His rule shall be one of consolation. Do not His disciples furnish an undeniable proof of it? Who among the wise and the great of earth has felt the joy of soul which these Galilean peasants experience? No one, let it be known; and therefore Jesus concludes: "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which ye see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them." For there is something of greater advantage and of greater glory than the spirit of prophecy

and the sceptre of kings: namely, to be the witnesses of the Messianic manifestation that brings salvation. The disciples are not only witnesses of it, they are the privileged elect and effective co-labourers in it.

From this time on the Seventy hold their places in the ranks of the Christian Church with their distinctive privileges. They are grouped around Our Lord in a state inferior to that of the Apostles, but superior to that of the simple faithful. After the Ascension we shall see them again constituting a special body, which shall have its particular prerogatives and functions in the definitive organisation of the new religious society.

Catholic theology commonly teaches that they were to pastors of the second order what the Apostles were to those of the first. For their institution seems to be perpetuated in the priests, who, having the care of souls, are, under the direction of bishops, the authorised labourers of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER III

A SCRIBE ASKS: "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?"

A Scribe Comes and Asks What One Must Do to Be Saved—Love God and Thy Neighbour—"Who Is My Neighbour?"—The Beautiful Parable of the Samaritan—In Misfortune We Desire to Have Every One as a Neighbour — Therefore the Afflicted Must Be Our Neighbours. (St. Matthew xix, 1; St. Mark x, 1; St. Luke x, 25–37.)

Concerning this first evangelisation of Peræa we have certain general information which likens it in many ways to that of Galilee. St. Matthew and St. Mark say, in fact, that the concourse of people around the youthful Prophet was very numerous. The mission of the seventy disciples, or the thirty-five couples of precursors, had not a little contributed to this. All wished to see Him of Whom such great things were told, and when they saw Him they were charmed by His personality, His eloquence, and His works.

Jesus began, "as He was accustomed," says St. Mark, to instruct those who came to Him, and His teaching, always so vivid in its sublime simplicity, stirred the souls of the peasants on the mountains of Galaad as it had those

of Galilee. The miracles He wrought gave a definite authority to His words.

St. Matthew observes that He healed the sick. They had been brought to Him in great numbers; for mankind is so constituted that bodily suffering always seems harder to bear than that of the soul. Men are always more eager to be healed than to be taught.

At times, however, there were to be found men who sought enlightenment, or, at least, desired to make this new Doctor prove His theological knowledge. This was the case with a certain Scribe who approached Jesus, very probably in the neighbourhood of Jericho. Inasmuch as the Master locates the scene of the parable (which He gives as His answer) on the road from this city to Jerusalem, and since He is found so soon afterward at the home of Martha and Mary, this hypothesis contains nothing improbable. Moreover, the nearer He approached to Judea, the more likely was He to encounter legalists and men preoccupied with the religious question, like the man mentioned here by St. Luke.

One day, therefore, while Jesus was instructing the people, a Scribe arose, and, wishing to try [1] Him, put the following question: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" The Gentiles were seeking the truth; the Jews, salvation. This man therefore speaks of salvation as of a heritage [2] promised to the true children of Israel,

[1] The term ἀνέστη indicates that the audience was seated listening to Him. Although the question was put to try Jesus—ἐκπειράζων—we should be wrong in deeming that it was dictated by malevolence. It contained no captious element, and the reply would in no case have any unpleasant consequences. We can at most ascribe to the Jewish doctor only the unfavourable intention of sounding the theological knowledge of the young Galilean Master. The word *tempting* ought to be taken here in the sense of *interrogating*. St. Matthew (xxii, 35) uses the same word in speaking of a Scribe who also tempts Jesus, and of whom, however, the Master says (*St. Mark* xii, 34) that he is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

[2] He employs the term κληρονομήσω.

and gives us the key-note of the religious life in the most ardent souls in Judaism. Jesus gazed intently at him. Then, pointing with His finger, perhaps, at the response written on one of the phylacteries which His questioner bore suspended from his head or from his arm,[3] or, more probably, appealing to the knowledge of His somewhat curious interrogator, and simply inviting him to reply himself, He said to him: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" The Scribe quite fittingly answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."[4] If it is to his personal reflections that he owed this appropriate union of two precepts found separate in the law of Moses,[5] and this admirable summing-up of the duties of man, we can only join with Jesus in paying homage to his wisdom. But, perhaps, he had already heard this important question treated by the Master Himself, or was led up to this excellent reply by a series of questions which the Evangelist has not preserved. In any case, he admirably sets forth the regular movement of divine love. According to him, it should issue from the heart, as from the centre of the moral life, to spread thence into the soul or consciousness, into the strength or will, into the mind or intellect, the wonderful trinity that most completely sums up the whole man.

[3] Passages from Scripture were inscribed in richly framed parchments, which were worn like amulets, strung upon the body, especially when the wearer was going to pray. (See Buxtorf, *Lex. Talmud.*, pp. 1743 and 2105.)

[4] The text of the law mentions only the heart, the soul, and the strength. (*Deut.* vi, 5.) The origin of this variant may be in the translation of the Septuagint, which the Evangelist no doubt had in mind together with the Hebrew text. The Septuagint translates *leb*, which signifies both *mind* and *heart*, by διάνοια, mind. St. Luke took it in the sense of *heart*, and has, at the same time, allowed the word *mind*, chosen by the Septuagint, to remain in his compilation.

[5] The first part is in *Deut.* vi, 5, and the second in *Levit.* xix, 18.

Proceeding from the most lively, the most profound, and the most sublime sources in man, it should seek God as the sovereign Good, and then it will extend to our neighbour, the image and work of God, whom we must esteem therefore and love as ourselves, for the love of God creates the love of our neighbour. "Thou hast answered right," said the Saviour, "this do and thou shalt live." To cling with all one's being to God and to all that is of God, is to begin to enjoy heaven here below, and consequently to make it certain in the future. He who has charity is just, and he who is just will be saved.

However, the Scribe was not content with this response. Whether it was that he was desirous of parading his own knowledge to a greater extent and of trying that of Jesus, or—which is more probable—that, feeling accused by the very encouragement of the Master to practise the law, he sought to excuse himself by the uncertainty in the words of the second part of this law, he immediately asked: "And who is my neighbour?" The meaning of the word *neighbour* seems to him to be vague. How is it to be understood in its application? Jesus will tell him with His customary kindness. First of all, it is not in books, but in the heart that one must look for the answer to this question. The voice of nature will furnish it better than all the theories that blossom in the human mind or are discussed in the Rabbinical schools. Among the theologians of the Synagogue, some have imagined that true fraternity did not reach beyond the family circle, others have extended it to the members of the same religious society, and many, in fine, have assigned to it as limits the boundary lines of one's country. But none of these theories was really in conformity with the divine precept. For, according to this, the human brotherhood rests upon a base as vast as mankind. Every man, by the very fact that he is

man, whatever be his family, his religion, his country, is close to us. He shares in our nature; and by his heart, his intelligence, his aspirations, his needs, he is near to our life, near to our whole being, and consequently is our brother or *neighbour*. Such doctrine may well be amazing to selfish hearts, but it is none the less true that, as formulated by the Master, it has entranced and filled generous souls with a holy enthusiasm. In addition to this, let us see the sweet and touching parable to which He had recourse in order to explain it in its fulness. "A certain man," He said, "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." This man must have been a Jew; at least we may conclude as much from the fact that he starts out from Jerusalem, as the Scribe himself had perhaps done quite recently. He travels on without fear. He was in his own country, and the succour of his compatriots naturally seemed assured. None of these details is needless in the exposition, and all together contribute to give to the parable a pungency that will impress it on the minds of His hearers. "And he fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and, having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead." The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is not long (about fourteen miles), but it passes through desert, rocky places, along precipices, where at all times brigands were accustomed to lie in wait for travellers to rob them.[6] The man of the parable had not allowed himself to be despoiled without defending himself; this explains the blows he had received. Alone, losing blood from every wound, beneath a devouring sun, unable to call for help, he lay there dying. Fortunately Providence has an eye for the abandoned.

"It chanced that a certain priest went down the same way." A priest is one whom we look upon as naturally most sympathetic. His familiar relations with God, Who

[6] *Antiq.*, xx, 6, 1; *Bell. Jud.*, xi, 12, 5; *St. Jerome*, in *Jerem.* iii, 2.

is sovereign mercy, should fill his heart with the fire of charity. This priest had probably left the Temple that very day, and was returning to his Levitic city, after having conscientiously performed his functions of the week. It was a good opportunity for him to prove that he knew how to do good to men, as well as to pay homage to God. He saw the unfortunate man. It was a heart-rending sight; the dying man lay upon the ground, too weak to ask for aid either by words or by look, but he kept calling out to him with all his gaping wounds and the painful groans which accompanied the gradual ebbing away of his life. The priest, trained, no doubt, in the school of the Pharisees and devoted to that vain, self-regarding religion which the Pharisees preached to their disciples, coldly turned a glance of pity in the direction of the wretched man, and, "turning aside, passed by." Evidently he thought himself too great a man to dismount, or too filled with important thoughts to stop.

"In like manner, also, a Levite." After the master, the servant. This second and more modest personage, accustomed to do the material services of the worship in the Temple, seemed prepared in advance for the good work that Providence was about to propose to him. He lived near enough to God to have in his heart a spark of charity, and modest enough before men to lend himself to the more humble offices of common life. "When he was near the place, and saw him"—this was a step farther than the priest had gone, and it appeared certain that the Levite would attempt something for the relief of such awful misery; but, no, like the other—he "passed by." Was it fear that had seized upon him, or was it merely disgust and annoyance at the sight of a man in so pitiable a state? We cannot say. The thought that no one witnessed his base conduct moved him to leave to others a

work which he was able to decline. If, perchance, he remembered the neighbour whom he ought to love as himself, his selfish casuistry at once told him that this unfortunate man was not included in the theological lists made out by the Rabbis. Heedless of the voice of humanity, of patriotism, of religion, he tells himself that this man, even a child of Israel like himself, was not absolutely his neighbour. The sigh of compassion, which he doubtless heaved, as he glanced toward him, was the sole alms he could afford him. No better than the priest, he, like him, went his way.

"But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him." To the Jews every Samaritan was a man of evil. In return, every Jew was detested by the Samaritans as a son of a hated race. Could this dying man, whom the priest and the Levite had not treated as a human being, although he was their fellow-countryman, seem to be a *neighbour* to the traveller from Samaria? The latter has already looked upon him, and by his costume he has recognised an enemy of his nation. Why should not he hurl at this wretch the insult which a hundred times he has received from Jewish lips: "It is but a dog; let me pass"? No, in the presence of death, he forgets all national and religious antipathies. He sees in this son of Israel a man, like himself, with the death-rattle in his throat. What does he owe him? In other words, is he his neighbour? Instead of interrogating the casuistry of the Rabbis, this honest traveller will seek in his own heart the answer to his question. He asks himself simply, if, lying there himself all bloody in the dust of the road, he would wish to find his neighbour in a Jew. Deep in his soul, the selfishness natural to every man tells him yes, and he decides that he must act as neighbour to this Jew who is dying.

"And seeing him, he was moved with compassion," the Master goes on. Thus, according to the beautiful thought of St. Gregory,[7] the Samaritan's first movement is to give him his sympathy, that is, the most precious thing he has. The rest must come as a consequence. Forgetting that he is hard pressed by business, that he has no relations in a hostile country, that he may even run serious risks therein, he yields only to the kind promptings of his heart. Bending over the dying man, he binds up his wounds, having poured over them oil and wine, simple remedies with which every traveller in the East ordinarily provides himself. Then he puts the wounded man upon his own beast, thus giving up his chance of escape from the brigands who may yet be in the neighbourhood. He advances on foot, supporting as best he can the wounded man whose groans touch his heart. In this way they arrive at the neighbouring[8] inn. There he sets about attending him at his ease. After several hours of fraternal solicitude his mission appeared to be ended. Turning him over to his compatriots and fellows in religion, the Jews, he had only to say: "Here, he is less my neighbour than yours; I leave him to you; it is for you to take my place." But, guided by the mere moral law, this good man's conscience spoke to him in far different language. Since important interests forbade him to lose much time on the road, he sought to find means of being by the side of the wounded man, even when he should have left him; he provides him with generous credit with the host who has received them. "The next day he took out two pence, and gave them to the host and said: Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."

[7] St. Greg., *Moralia*, xx, 36.

[8] Being a Samaritan, he could not accept hospitality from Jews. He had to seek shelter in a public place, in an inn open to all travellers.

The parable was ended. By the contrast which He cleverly drew between the coldness of the first two and the charity of the third, the Master has just dictated the answer to the difficulty proposed: "Who is my neighbour?" Nevertheless, He wished the Scribe to formulate it himself. "Which of these three," He said to him, "in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?" At first sight, the question seems to be awkwardly put. For the Scribe had asked who is the neighbour of him who is to give relief? and not whose neighbour is this latter? But it is easy to understand how the word *neighbour* establishes a necessary correlation. Inasmuch as it signifies *nearness* it supposes reciprocity. One is neighbour to his neighbour, as he is brother to his brother. Hence to reverse the terms is, indeed, the right of the Teacher Who is giving the lesson, especially if He seeks to dictate the more surely in this way the answer desired. This is the case here. For we understand the extent of a duty better by the relations of others to ourselves than by our relations to them. The Scribe may well ask himself who is his neighbour, and, if there is question of doing good to others, hesitate in his response. On the other hand, he will formulate it at once when it is a matter of being aided himself. Let him put himself in the place of the wounded man, and he will see if the question embarrasses him for a single instant. There is no doubt of it, even a Samaritan, out-and-out Samaritan as he may be, can be neighbour to a Jew. The Scribe yields and acknowledges it to be so; but with a trace of national sensitiveness, instead of simply naming the Samaritan, he has recourse to circumlocution. "He," he says, "that showed mercy to him." And Jesus said to him: "Go and do thou in like manner." That is to say: "In spite of all barriers of nationality, of religion, of private or public antipathies, be a *neighbour*

to every man in trouble. Were misfortune to come to thee thyself, whom shouldst thou wish to find upon the way as a kind neighbour? Any man, without doubt. Therefore, consider that in thy turn thou must treat every man as thy neighbour."

CHAPTER IV

THE HOME OF MARTHA AND MARY

The Family at Bethany—Martha, Lazarus, and Mary —The Different Characters of the Two Sisters—Mary's Is Easily Explained, Especially if She Was None Other Than the Sinner, Mary Magdalen—Decisive Reasons That Support This Hypothesis—Magdalen Had at That Time Gone Back to Bethany—The Social Position of the Family—Hospitality Differently Offered and Differently Understood by the Sisters — Martha Is Troubled, Whereas Mary Listens — Martha's Vexation and Her Demand—Jesus' Reply—A Lesson of Wisdom. (St. Luke x, 38–42.)

On the feast of the Dedication, which would be celebrated soon, Jesus intended to appear suddenly once more in Jerusalem, this time for a briefer period than on the feast of Tabernacles. The general state of mind did not permit Him to remain long and without precaution in the capital. By stirring up a movement which would bring on the final catastrophe He would have compromised the whole divine plan. For the faithful fulfilment of the prophecies, Jesus must appear in Jerusalem, as the official Messiah acclaimed by His followers, only on the approaching feast of the Passover. It is on the day following this triumph that, generously surrendering to His enemies, He must, as the

sublime realisation of the Paschal Lamb, die upon the Cross, to demonstrate to all Israel assembled what kind of Messiah He had consented to be. Once again, therefore, He betook Himself to the Holy City without commotion and, as it were, after having hidden in the neighbourhood.

Fifteen stadia, that is, less than two miles, from Jerusalem, in the town of Bethany, was a house in which He was a welcome guest. If Mary Magdalen, one of the women accompanying the Apostolic group from Galilee, was, as we shall endeavour to prove, a member of the family that dwelt there, we may easily understand that there was an agreement between her and Jesus, whereby the latter had a secure refuge which would enable Him to appear unexpectedly in the Temple and then to disappear as suddenly.

St. Luke, with little attention, at this point, to the chronological order of events of which he seems to have lost the thread, suddenly presents the Master in a locality which he does not designate, at the home of two women, Martha and Mary, till then unmentioned in his Gospel, nor does he refer to them thereafter. Happily the fourth Gospel supplies the omission by informing us more thoroughly of the interesting details of the family life at Bethany. In this way are explained the frequent visits of Jesus before the fatal Passover.[1] The mistress of the house seems to have been Martha,[2] either because she was the eldest of the family, or because circumstances had caused to devolve on her the whole charge of a home deprived of its head. This latter, who, according to an ancient tradition, was Simon the leper,[3] mentioned without further details by

[1] *St. John* xviii, 2; *St. Luke* xxi, 37; xxii, 39.

[2] Μάρθα ὑπεδέξατο αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς, says St. Luke. She does the honours of her house.

[3] See Greswell's interesting dissertation: *On the Village of Martha and Mary;* Nicephorus, *H. E.*, i, 27; Theophylact on this passage, etc. Since Martha is honoured as a virgin by the Church it is more correct to suppose that Simon was not her husband, but her father.

St. Matthew and St. Mark,[4] seems to have left his place vacant in this house at the time when Jesus appears there. It is difficult to say whether he was really dead or merely separated from the society of the living by his leprosy. The Evangelists simply mention him without any qualification or description. It is certain, however, that, besides Martha, who governed the house, the family contained another daughter named Mary, and a son called Lazarus. As we do not see that the latter ever held the first place in the domestic circle, and since on one occasion he is simply classed among the guests,[5] while his sisters do the honours of the house, we may conclude either that he was still young or that his own domicile was elsewhere. It is, perhaps, on this account that St. Luke does not mention him in the present narrative, and is content with confining our attention to Martha and Mary.

Equally good and devoted to the Master, the two sisters were entirely dissimilar both in temperament and experience. Martha was a practical, active woman, proving her affection by her care of human things; in a word, she was of that stamp of which many are needed for the happiness of mankind. Mary was an intelligent, meditative woman, lofty in her aspirations, of the kind with which we are happy to meet for the honour of the sex to which they belong. The one, no doubt, saw heaven beyond earth; the other scarcely thought of earth after knowing heaven. A soul like Martha's could not know the great storms of life; a heart like Mary's was made to seek them, to pass through and to issue from them, bruised, but still able to effect for itself a new existence. The difference between these two characters will be emphasised clearly, later on, by the difference between the relations of the two sisters to the Master. From this time on we shall find its cause

[4] *St. Matt.* xxvi, 6; *St. Mark* xiv, 3. [5] *St. John* xii, 2.

in the decisive fact that Martha had always led the exemplary life of a woman faithful to her domestic duties, and could not, therefore, feel for Jesus that vivid affection which was called forth in Mary by a gifted nature, as well as by some most lamentable fall and better-grounded feelings of gratitude.

For it is our opinion that Mary was that Magdalen whom Jesus had delivered from the seven devils, that is, from the sad life of disorder and sin into which woman falls when she tramples on her own self-respect in order shamelessly to obey the behests of passion. We have no hesitation [6] in identifying her with the sinner who, at the banquet of Simon the Pharisee, had by her heroic repentance deserved pardon for her sins and merited a most glorious rehabilitation.

It is true, the Synoptics have not a single word to support our opinion; but the simple motive of prudence is sufficient to explain their reserve. For it was quite natural that they, among whom the Synoptic tradition had its source, should cover with the veil of discretion the errors of the celebrated woman who played so important a part in the foundation of the Church, and whom every one honoured because of her boundless devotion to the person and cause of the Master. As a matter of fact, in the primitive community the answer to this difficulty was known to all. The pagans alone could have been ignorant of it, and it would appear the part of wisdom to conceal from their weakness

[6] The solution of this difficulty cannot be sought in the Fathers of the Church. First of all, they are far from agreeing among themselves, some distinguishing three persons: the sinner, Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the sister of Lazarus; others identifying the sinner with Mary Magdalen, but refusing to acknowledge her as the sister of Lazarus; others, finally, asserting, as we do, that the three are only one person. But the most surprising thing is that often the same doctor, whether Augustine, Jerome, or Origen, is not always of the same mind himself, and changes his opinion in different passages where he treats this question. (See Baronius, *Annales*, 32, § 18 *et seq.*; Bolland, *Act. Sanct.*, etc.)

and their malice the scandal of a prostitute having become for Jesus a most faithful friend, and for the nascent Church the foremost witness and the eloquent preacher of the Resurrection.

St. John wrote his Gospel only later, when the family in Bethany had disappeared, and when the Church, for her part, had given the world proof of her sanctity. He did not feel himself bound to any niceties of language, and, slipping in a word in parenthesis, as if unawares, he cleared up the situation and dispelled all uncertainty. In the second verse of the eleventh chapter, immediately after having named Mary, the sister of Lazarus, he adds: "And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair." Surely if this singular evidence of affection and respect had been given to Jesus by two different women it was not right to make it the distinctive sign and special merit of one of them. Our observation is peculiarly true, if, at the time he speaks, he intended to characterise her by an act which, in the historical order, she has not yet performed,[7] whereas the other has already long since accomplished hers. The allusion, thus anticipated, is scarcely intelligible. It is quite natural, on the contrary, if it refers to the past event which tradition, as written down by St. Luke,[8] had made famous throughout the whole Church, and in which the sinner had obtained her pardon.

Whoever studies the question without prejudice must find it quite improbable that two women, on different occasions, should have taken the notion to loosen their hair, and with it to wipe the Master's feet, after having anointed them with ointment in which, the first time, tears had been mingled. But as, on the other hand, it is im-

[7] It is only in ch. xii that St. John relates the anointing at Bethania.
[8] *St. Luke* vii, 36–50.

possible to reduce both anointings to one, since they are characterised by different details, one feels forced to say that it was one and the same woman's heart that devised this twofold demonstration of love and of humility that commands our admiration. It seems altogether natural that, when the Master was on the point of quitting earth, the illustrious penitent of Magdala, now the faithful and privileged friend, should have wished to repeat the touching scene of sorrow and of mercy in which her poor soul had regained its life. There is in it even this shade of extreme delicacy that, the second time, Mary derives from the consciousness of full rehabilitation a pious daring of which she would have been incapable at first. She who formerly had anointed only the feet, then covered His head, too, with her ointment, venturing to look upon it without a blush and even to touch it with respect. In her eyes she no longer had tears, because in her heart she bore the sweet quietude of a holy love. Even if we should grant that her life was a blameless one, what could be the purport of describing this sister of Lazarus, as coming into the midst of the banquet to undo her hair, as a faithless woman does before the priest, seeking thus to humble to the vilest of services that which in her had not sinned? Such an act would be no less strange in a virtuous girl than it is significant and sublime in the woman of sin asking pardon or generously recalling the pardon already obtained.

Jesus honoured her by declaring that her memory would be celebrated wherever the Gospel was preached. But is it not true that this promise made to Lazarus's sister has been exactly fulfilled in Mary Magdalen? Is not she always the first named among the holy women,[9] as St. Peter

[9] *St. Luke* viii, 2; xxiv, 10; *St. Matt.* xxvii, 56, 61; xxviii, 1; *St. Mark* xv, 40, 47; xvi, 1, 9. St. John himself, although making an exception once

is among the Apostles? To hesitate to identify Mary, the sister of Lazarus, with Magdalen, would be to assert that this woman, otherwise so ardent, so well-beloved, so faithful, had no special part in the great scenes of the Passion and the Resurrection; it would be equivalent to saying that she had not the strength to bring to its conclusion, when the Master was dead, that generous embalmment which she had begun during his life.[10] All this seems scarcely reasonable. Moreover, there is a strong moral argument in favour of our position in the very attitude of this woman, who can never encounter Jesus without seeking to place herself at His feet, as if she deserved to occupy no other spot in His presence than that very one where she had once gained His goodwill and His mercy! Whether she listens or supplicates, wherever she meets Him Whom she loves it is always at His feet that she is found.[11] Martha does not do this, because in her life she has neither the same regrets nor the same consolations.

At any rate, it must be agreed that if, on the one hand, there is nothing unlikely in admitting that, by her ardent, demonstrative love, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, reminds us absolutely of the generous emotions of the pardoned sinner, on the other, both of these women are to be found admirably personified, with all their courage and tender attachment to Jesus, in that Magdalen who, from the evening on Calvary to the morning of the Resurrection, is ever the most faithful and most valiant of all. Therefore, it

by naming Magdalen in the third place (xix, 26), because he placed the Saviour's mother first and, with her, her sister or sister-in-law, Mary Cleophas, returns to this order in xx, 1 and 18, where of all the holy women he mentions only Magdalen. The primitive Church gave her the title *ἰσαποστόλου*, as if she had been equal to the Apostles, and St. Modestus qualifies her as *ἀρχηγός*, making her the chief of the group of women, as Peter was of the group of men.

[10] *St. John* xii, 7; *St. Mark* xiv, 8; *St. Matt.* xxvi, 12.

[11] *St. Luke* x, 39; *St. John* xi, 32; xii, 3; xx, 17.

is not possible to suggest difficulties on the score of psychology here, and there is nothing to prevent us logically from identifying all three. To divide, on the other hand, that part of generous friendship, which accompanies the Master from His Galilean ministry to His final glorification, among a succession of persons having nothing in common with each other would render Magdalen's unusual devotion, as well as Mary's exceptional situation in the family in Bethany, inexplicable; this would throw back into the shadow, immediately after having shown it forth, the ravishing picture of the penitent and rehabilitated woman of sin.

According to the tradition of the Rabbis, Martha's sister had at an early date been married to one of Herod's officers. Her husband's jealousy, no less than the frivolity of her own heart, had unfortunately engaged her in that train of adventures in which woman rarely halts until she has come to know the depths of the abyss. It was at Magdala that she had given herself up to the most shameful misconduct, and it was there too, as we have seen, that the Saviour's grace had purified her. From that moment the group of Apostles had learned to esteem her whom Jesus had been pleased to reinstate with such renown. Magdalen—she had retained this name,[12] which perpetuated the

[12] We have no doubt that *Magdalen* is derived from *Magdala*. It was in Galilee that Mary first appeared with this surname; we may conclude, therefore, that she received it there in remembrance of the locality that was scandalised by her misconduct. Many, however, have thought to find the derivation of this qualifying word in *gadal* ("to twist," "to curl"), in the *piel* form, and, in fact, we find Miriam Magaddela, Mary, the hair-dresser, mentioned by the Rabbis. (See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr. in Matt.* xxvi, 56, and *Harm. Evang. in Luc.* viii, 3.) The importance which the sinful woman seemed to attach to her hair would support this explanation, if the former were not the more natural one. Origen takes the word *gadal* as meaning "to be great," and translates it: "Mary the Great," because of the part this illustrious believer had played in the primitive Church. (*Tract. in Matt.* xxxv.) St. Jerome (*Epist. ad Principiam*) derives the signification of the surname from *migdal* ("tower"), and is of the opinion that it was desired, in

memory of her faults and of her repentance—joined the holy women who were accompanying the Master,[18] and, at the very outset, attained the foremost place by her zeal, intelligence, and courage. Nothing could be more natural than to find her here, not following, but preceding the Master on His way to Jerusalem. Nothing could be more delightful to her than to provide generous hospitality for the Master and His disciples in her own family, where by her extraordinary conversion she had deserved to be reinstated. Martha must have shared this legitimate desire.

On examining the various details of the Gospel narrations, one is inclined to conclude that great comfort reigned in this house in Bethany. We shall see there the resurrection of Lazarus magnificently celebrated by a crowded banquet. The family possessed a monumental sepulchre cut in the face of the cliff. We may suppose that the home-furnishings were sumptuous, since Mary discovered among them an alabaster vase. The exquisite ointment with which this was filled reveals likewise undeniable habits of luxury and comfort. Excellent relations joined these two sisters to the principal leaders of the religious party in Jerusalem; and this is a proof that the men of this family had played an important part in their country. For around the bier of Lazarus we shall see the Jews—that is, in the ordinary meaning which St. John assigns to this word, the party of the opposition, Scribes, elders of the people, chief-priests, Pharisees of every rank—who come to share in the mourning and to bear to the two sisters their friendly condolence.

And yet, withal, the true charm of this home lay in the hearts of the two women who dwelt there, of whose lovable

giving this name to Mary, to signalise the firm and robust faith which had made her, as it were, *an unshaken tower*, in the midst of the hesitation of the Apostolic circle.

[18] *St. Luke* xxiii, 55.

characters St. Luke gives us, as it were, an artist's rapid sketch in outline.

As the Master enters, both set about receiving Him;[14] but as soon as He begins to speak for the purpose of instructing His disciples, Mary stops her work and takes her place among them. Near to those blessed feet, which she had once wet with tears, she, absorbed in delight, receives spiritual nourishment, and pays no further attention to the final details of the banquet. This attitude, wherein devotion is joined with tender familiarity, is quite in keeping with Magdalen's character. She is accustomed, more than her sister, to see the Master close at hand, to divine His real wishes, and to respond to the advances of His grace. Her soul, more finely balanced than Martha's, is better prepared to gather and to render fruitful any lessons of sublime spirituality. That is why she eagerly seeks them. She has learned this desire or this knowledge of perfection in tears of sorrow and in bursts of gratitude which her sister has never known. For her all things must wait until she has cared for her long-neglected soul; and she is certain of pleasing the Master better by listening to Him than by serving Him. If she owed it to her respect for her guest to set to work to prepare Him a fitting welcome, she has done so; Jesus, Who now begins to speak in order to distribute the bread of life, gives her to understand that her part as ministrant is ended, and that of disciple begins. Hers is a quickly understanding heart. If her sister, as a most careful and almost vain mistress of the house, deems something more to be necessary for the harmony of the banquet, Mary leaves her

[14] There are two indications to show that Mary had helped effectively in preparing for this reception: the words ἡ καὶ παρακαθίσασα signify that, after having worked, Mary also had sat down; and Martha saying: "Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister *hath left* me alone to serve?" is a final proof, for she admits that Mary had aided awhile.

free to seek her pleasure wherever she may find it. Hers is at the feet of Him Who at this moment is giving out the nourishment of the soul, and she most wisely permits herself to be served instead of serving herself.

The Master Who speaks sees no harm in this. Martha, however, is troubled by it. Nothing seems to her good enough for the honourable reception which she has prepared or which is suddenly demanded, for her excitement would lead one to think that Jesus, Whose coming was announced sooner or later, had in reality arrived unexpectedly. Engrossed in the care of the thousand details which courtesy requires and vanity exaggerates, she hurries to and fro like the wind,[15] regretting that she cannot, like the others, listen to Jesus' discourse. The solicitude that occupies her mind prevents her from even understanding the little she hears in passing. Her sister, however, continues to enjoy, at her ease, the Master's conversation. Her enviable calmness, the privileged seat which she occupies, and finally that instinctive discontent which one feels in living side by side with fortunate people without sharing in their good fortune, end in causing to burst forth the anger of her who is tiring herself, while others are taking their rest. Suddenly, in the midst of her hurry, Martha halts before the Master,[16] and in a voice of loving reproach, penetrated, nevertheless, by a touch of piquancy, she accuses her sister of being too selfish, and Jesus of being almost partial. "Lord, hast Thou no care," she says, "that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me." Such is the petty

[15] This is signified by the word τυρβάζῃ, which Jesus employs to describe her concern.

[16] The term ἐπιστᾶσα, which should be translated "having stood up," depicts the natural attitude of a woman reproaching her companions for taking too much repose, while she herself is becoming exhausted in doing alone the work of two.

satisfaction demanded by her self-love; since Jesus does not appear to notice that the one is working while the other does nothing, He will be forced Himself to punish the latter by paying homage to the activity of the former. This is the best means of withdrawing Mary at once from the happiness she is enjoying. On the other hand, it will be a good lesson for her; for, coming from the lips of the Lord Himself, it will undeceive her who deems herself praiseworthy for sitting in ecstasy at His feet. Such is the punishment suddenly imagined by Martha, and she already flatters herself that she has obtained it.

But Jesus with a single glance sounds the depths of the soul of this woman who, in other respects above reproach, judges wrongly of the present situation. He charitably gives her the lesson for which she seeks, and it is for her to profit by it. "Martha, Martha,"[17] He says to her, "thou art careful and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her." Thus, with an adroitness equalled only by the justice of His rebuke, the Master fulfilled the part of Judge which was offered to Him. Martha was desirous of a little humiliation for her sister, and she has succeeded only in bringing it upon herself. Mary is praised for having divined that the best part of the banquet was that of the nourishment of the soul. She did well to choose it courageously; and it is in the power of no one, not even of her anxious and discontented sister, to take it from her. As for Martha, if she desires to behave wisely and so please the Master, she has only to follow Mary's example and to sit down like

[17] The name, twice repeated, summons her who bears it to reflect, that she may examine herself and see who is in error. Thus Jesus also says to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan," etc.; and to Paul: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" In this form of warning, firmness is cloaked in an amiable tone of tenderness.

her and share in the spiritual feast. What was needed for the material repast was prepared long since; to worry about the preparation of what is superfluous and for the sake of this to refuse to listen to a discourse which is the best morsel of the banquet, is folly. Martha should accuse not her sister, but her own vanity, which moves her to silence her desire of the divine word, and to prefer the fleeting approbation of the guests to the goods of the soul which alone are worth seeking. Mary's attitude is to be admired and imitated. Since all that is necessary, according to Jesus' amiable play on the word, is assured for the body, let it now be made certain for the soul. However scarce the meats on the table, the guests shall, nevertheless, succeed in satisfying their needs; but if in their hearts there is a lack of religion they can never be saved. Thus, with His customary graciousness, Our Lord was pleased to acknowledge by useful lessons the hospitality afforded Him.

CHAPTER V

JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY

THE DISCIPLES AND THE THEORY OF PRAYER — THE LORD'S PRAYER: THE INVOCATION, THE SIX PETITIONS IN PARTICULAR AND IN THEIR RELATIONS, THE CONCLUSION—THE EFFICACIOUSNESS OF PRAYER PROVED BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE FRIEND—THE PATERNAL GOODNESS OF GOD. (St. Luke xi, 1–13; St. Matthew vi, 9–13; vii, 7–11.)

THE pilgrim who visits to-day El-Azarieh, the ancient Bethany, can hardly form any idea of what this ugly little village must have been in former times. Adversity has overtaken it and desolation surrounds it on every side. However, its site on the slope of a hill, looking toward the east and the south, made it certain of warm sunshine in winter and a refreshing breeze in summer. The few trees that have survived the general ruin, the flowers that besprinkle the fields and that the children delight in making into pretty bouquets which they present to passers-by, the figs, the olives, the almonds, and other fine fruits gathered here, attest that there might once have been in this valley a trim little town full of charm and life. The road to Jericho, always well frequented, ran through it. *Bethany* meant probably "the house of dates," and the ruins of cis-

terns found everywhere mark the location of numerous villas. There in the midst of palms, sycamores, and fig-trees, the rich families of Jerusalem sought shelter from the heat of midsummer. The landscape, beautified by all that the hand of man could add in verdure and luxuriant vegetation around picturesque dwellings, was an oasis of peace and rest at the gates of the capital. We can see how Jesus, welcomed by a devout and pious family, was happy to dwell there, and we can easily imagine Him, on the terrace of one of these white houses, with the restfulness which watchful friends assured Him, discoursing with His hearers on the most sublime and subtle questions of the spiritual life.

Far from the multitude hungry for miracles, and from the Pharisees ever ready to show their ill-will, the disciples enjoyed at ease the conversation of their youthful Master. The devoted hostesses of Bethany, by their attention and their desire to learn, excited, no doubt, the emulation of the others. It is not unusual for an intelligent woman to bring a laudable ardour into the discussion of religious questions. In the search for truth she readily becomes impassioned, and often her natural disposition, aided by the light it receives from the heart, makes her a remarkable disciple in the eyes of the Master to Whom she listens. It is certain, at any rate, that the Apostles, filled with great zeal, seem henceforth to have been most eager for instruction. We see them questioning the Master and giving Him the theme which He must treat in order to respond to their desires.

Thus, according to St. Luke, one day just as He had finished praying—Jesus' prayer did not consist in a perpetual elevation of the soul toward God, He poured out His soul in positive supplications before His Father—all, admiring the ecstatic ardour of His prayer, piously

grouped themselves about Him. Unable to imitate His fervour, they would like to know at least the secret of it. One of them said to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." [1] John had, according to this, given a form of prayer to his disciples and, perhaps, it was one of them who, at present an Apostle—there were several such—spoke thus to Jesus. The Master, with the graciousness that made His whole person so attractive, answered: "When you pray, say:

" 'Our Father Who art in heaven!' "

One feels that, by this invocation, the head of man, bent for so many ages beneath the heavy yoke of the law, rises up with a holy dignity in confidence and in love. Israel had known Jehovah as Master, but had never dared to invoke Him as Father.[2] It is the Incarnation and the sacrifice of the Cross that make mankind, possessed and cleansed by the Word, henceforth not merely the servant, but the child of God. In these two words, "*Our Father*," are spoken the two sentiments that should inspire the Christian soul in prayer: filial love for God, its Father, and fraternal love for the Christian community with whose interests its own are identified. How broad the horizon and what grandeur in him who thus begins his supplication!

He speaks to a Father unlike the fathers of earth.[3] That is why he strengthens his confidence by the thought that this Father reigning in heaven is all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful, and that He must necessarily hear His children. Heaven is not the vault dotted with bright bod-

[1] This request suggests the belief that Jesus had not as yet formulated any set model of prayer for His disciples. In this case it was simply by an association of ideas easily understood that St. Matthew introduced into the Sermon on the Mount his fragment concerning the way to pray.

[2] If, in the Old Testament, God is qualified as Father, this is in relation to the whole people and not in relation to individuals. (*Isa.* lxiii, 16; compare *Ps.* ciii, 13.)

[3] *Ephes.* iii, 15; iv, 7.

ies that unrolls above our head, but the mysterious region where, beyond all that our eye can see or our intellect can grasp, dwells the invisible Cause of the universe.

Six petitions—there may be seven, if we subdivide the last [4]—sum up all the desires that should exist in a religious heart. The three petitions that refer to God's interests come first. Thus man proves that he can silence his egotism, and give utterance first of all to his filial love for His Father in heaven. The others correspond to the various needs of our nature. We must, however, acknowledge that whatever adds to the glory of God will be also for the happiness of man, and, in turn, whatever is granted to man will increase the glory of God. The interests of Creator and of creature are so identical that to advance the former is also to provide for the latter. For God's will which is fulfilled on earth becomes man's good; and the temptation that man repels turns to the honour of God.

"Hallowed be Thy name!"

The name is the person represented.[5] To respect a name is to honour him who bears it. The Christian begs that God's great name may be venerated by mankind. It will be the more venerated, the clearer, the purer, and the more complete our idea is of the Being it represents.

[4] By the word *but*, which joins it to the preceding petition, and by the similarity of the desire it expresses, the seventh petition can indeed be identified with the sixth. It is true we thus sacrifice the number seven, which has a symbolical meaning. But the parallelism then becomes perfect. The six desires of the faithful soul are divided into three for the glory of God and three for the interests of man. In *St. Luke* xi, 2, the real and primitive text, according to the best manuscripts, was shorter: "Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation." There were, then, only five petitions. The two others were added by copyists to make it like the text of St. Matthew (vi, 9–11), who reproduces more faithfully the form given by Jesus. This difference between the two Evangelists proves that they did not draw from a written source—they would then have been identical—but from sources arising from oral tradition and admitting the possibility of variants.

[5] *Isa.* vi, 3; xxix, 23; *Ezech.* xxxvi, 23, etc.

Therefore this wish implies the desire to see God better and better known in His attributes, which constitute His infinite perfection. Then, man, contemplating in the depth of his conscience, better still than in the rest of creation, the splendid image of the Creator with His ideal beauty, will exclaim with the Seraphim: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts." He will speak His name only with that respect which is due to His incomparable sanctity.

"Thy Kingdom come!"

What an admirable cry of love and impatience, uttered to Him Who directs men and events! A respected name does not suffice for God's glory. It were little merely to be known and even honoured by men, if this God did not intervene directly as King among mankind. His throne must have its place among us. This will be prepared by the preaching of the Gospel. The diffusion of grace by the Holy Ghost will definitively establish it by founding the Church. But we must needs pray each day that God may force Himself into our souls as King, that He may enter into us with His sceptre to guide us, with His potent vigilance to guard us, with His paternal love to save us. As His Kingdom broadens, so His glory increases, and so salvation becomes more general in the world. How good it is for the soul to perceive that with the coming of such a kingdom there come also deliverance from all evil and the approach of all good; especially when it recollects that death, leading to eternity, will change our sweet state of temporary subjection to such a Master, into the happy and unending service of heaven. For this petition does not stop with the present life, it aims at the future life also; and justly so, for in its fulness the Kingdom of God overspreads time and eternity.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

Just as the pure notion of God must bring on His King-

dom, so this Kingdom should make His will the will of all men. Are we able to will anything better than what God wills? His will is enlightened by His infinite knowledge, and controlled by His eternal reason. Can man procure a more perfect rule than this? He should then seek first to know it, and, knowing it, he should follow it, in spite of all obstacles that may arise from passion, native weakness, and the suggestions of the demon. Thus he shall associate his life with the divine life itself, following the same law and guided by the same will. This the Angels do in heaven.

Such is the ideal of the world, as we should wish to have it in reality: the Heavenly Father, God, known and honoured, His Kingdom established, His will absorbing all the wills of men. Nothing more beautiful can be imagined, nothing grander, nothing more divine.

But, that this may come to pass, man must needs live; he must obtain from God pardon for the past and all-powerful aid for the present. *Prius est esse*, say the philosophers; but mere existence does not suffice in order to work efficaciously for God's glory; one must be just, and consequently cleansed of his faults; and, finally, he must avoid evil and do good. Hence the believer's motive in speaking of himself in the second part of the Lord's Prayer. But to keep it free from egotism, he speaks here in the name of all his brethren. Thus, uniting to the love of God true charity for his neighbour, his prayer will be the divine law realised in the most inward part of man the religious movement of the heart.

"Give us this day our supersubstantial [6] bread."

[6] It has always been found difficult to translate the adjective qualifying the word *bread*. The term ἐπιούσιον, as Origen observes (*de Orat.*, 27), is a neologism of the Evangelists. "It is found," he says, "neither in the language of the learned nor in that of the unlearned." It was coined by those who, wishing to teach the Lord's Prayer in Greek, could find no other

There is something touching in this filial trust with which each day we put forth our hands to Providence, like humble mendicants, and ask the nourishment needful for body and soul. One without the other cannot make us perfect men; *mens sana in corpore sano* are words of ancient wisdom. The faithful man humbly asks for bread. He knows well that God will not give it without some accompanying gift.[7] It is for to-day that he asks it; he recollects that for the morrow he must not worry. He desires only what is sufficient, without superfluity; simplicity, evangelical sobriety demand no more. If God gives it in superabundance, He shall, indeed, be thanked; since He shall have enabled us to share it with others, after we have enjoyed it ourselves; but should He grant only what is strictly enough, He shall even then be loved and thanked. The body shall consume the bread, the soul the truth. For the body are the nutriments of earth, for the soul God, the food of the spirits in heaven. As a middle term uniting these two extremes, God and material substances, the Eucharistic bread, or bread of heaven, shall nourish with Jesus Christ Himself, the devout supplicant who has sought and obtained it.

term for the Aramean expression employed by Jesus. If it is derived from ἔπειμι, it signifies the bread of the *following day*, or of *the day that is coming;* thus it is said, ἐπιοῦσα ἡμέρα (*Acts* vii, 26; xxi, 18, etc.). It would correspond to the word *mahar* which St. Jerome says he read in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. But this meaning is hardly consistent with Jesus' words, which recommend us not to worry for the morrow; and St. Luke, using καθ'ἡμέραν instead of σήμερον, as in St. Matthew, seems to indicate that the nourishment of to-day is referred to here, and not that of the morrow. Many prefer to take this disputed term as a compound of ἐπί and οὐσία, *existence*, or *essence*, and in this case it would mean bread sufficient for existence, or, as the *Book of Proverbs* has it (xxx, 8), the *necessaries of life*. The observation of Saumaise that then it would have to be ἐπούσιον is without foundation. Ἐπί frequently retains the iota before a vowel or a diphthong: ἐπιεικής, ἐπίουρος.

[7] The Hebrew word *chem*, which Jesus probably employed, means nourishment in general. (*Gen.* xviii, 5.)

"Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive every one that is indebted to us!"

Often this is a great deal for a man to ask, for his faults are grave and many; but he hastens to represent to God that, although he may not be good himself, he relinquishes all debts that may be due him. Would the Creator be less generous than His creature? Has He not said that man shall receive according to the measure of his giving to others? On his knees, therefore, his hands crossed upon his breast, with sorrow in his heart, the prodigal son every day begs his Father's favour, although he cannot absolutely promise not to fall again. For if, in fact, he fall again to-morrow, he will beseech Him again, and to-morrow again he shall be heard. It is only when the heart, angry and full of hate, refuses to forget the wrongs of a guilty brother, that it is forbidden us to seek forgiveness of our own faults or even to hope for it. If we desire vengeance against one who has injured us, it is logical that God, too, should hold His suspended above our heads. But if we forgive, God, too, will forgive us.

After the forgiveness of sins, the faithful man turns his attention to the sins he must avoid. They come by temptation. Temptation is not always a test by which God tries man and holds him to a selection between good and evil; it signifies besides, and most frequently, the work of the demon who pushes us on to sin, alluring our souls at times by illusions which he brings into our minds, at times by the vile longings which he excites in our hearts. The trial that God sends us is not an evil; it were cowardly to ask Him to spare us that. The suggestion of the devil, on the contrary, is always a terrible danger, and it is to this that we must give our attention, beseeching the Heavenly Father never to deliver us up to this disastrous influence.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One." [8]

Such is the malice of our fallen nature, that, if, in the presence of temptation, God withdraws His saving hand for a single instant and leaves us to ourselves, we are sure to fall.[9] Even after the Redemption we are but freedmen in perpetual fear of passing again beneath the yoke of our ancient master. We feel our weakness, and we say to God: "Leave me not even for a moment, for the enemy would profit by it to retake me. Help me ever by Thy grace, and, when the danger of sin is at hand, keep desire from me, and, if it be in me, save me from the danger."

Thus we may sum up in two groups, each containing three parallel petitions, the most varied desires of a prayerful heart. We have here a whole world of wishes. If we analyse closely the petitions of each series, we shall easily observe that the first is addressed to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. It is the Father's name that is to be sanctified, and it is the Father, the Creator of the world, Who is to give our daily bread. It is the Kingdom of the Son that is to come, and it is the Son again Who, by His Redemption, is to pardon all offences. It is the will or influence of the Holy Spirit that is to govern hearts, and again it is the Spirit Who, by grace, is to deliver us from the tempter and his suggestions.

And yet, with all its perfection, Jesus seems to have let fall from His lips this incomparable masterpiece of divine knowledge, of piety, of feeling, as one merely paus-

[8] The expression τοῦ πονηροῦ may be taken also in the neuter sense and be translated, "deliver us from evil." Authorities among the ancients, as among the moderns, are divided in opinion. In preferring the masculine and concrete sense, we rely on analogous passages: *St. Matt.* v, 37; xiii, 19; *St. John* xvii, 15; *I Epist.* of *St. John* ii, 13; iii, 8, 12; *Rom.* xvi, 20; *Ephes.* vi, 16; *II Thessal.* iii, 3.

[9] *Rom.* i, 24, 26–28.

ing to exemplify for children who seek an explanation. It is not like a formulary which He has prepared and intends to enforce upon His disciples. It is, as it were, a note escaping by chance from the broad harmony that fills His religious soul, a ray of His interior light that suddenly shines forth, a jewel that falls from His treasures of devotion; but how beautiful it is, and how splendidly are expressed in it all the finest sentiments of the most perfect religion!

It is remarkable that in this model of prayer Jesus teaches us to command rather than to ask. It is by a rapid series of imperatives that we speak to God, an evident proof that we count on being heard. The last word which forms the conclusion [10] of the Lord's Prayer: "Amen," [11] corresponds with this conviction. "So shall it be!" we say. God cannot resist the soul that prays with such filial confidence. If at times He seems not to hear, let us reiterate our supplications. In the end it is He Who will acknowledge Himself vanquished by our persistency, and He will hear us.

[10] In some manuscripts this admirable prayer terminates with these words: "for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." This is probably an interpolation taken from the liturgy. To be sure, three Syriac versions, the Peschito, the Philoxenian, and that of Jerusalem, as well as the Ethiopian, the Aramean, and the Apostolic constitutions, have this termination. But Griesbach has observed long since that of all these, only one, the Peschito, dates from beyond the fourth century. But the Peschito itself, having been reviewed at a time much later than that of its first composition, according to the Greek text, has not sufficient authority to counterbalance the testimony that suppresses this doxology. Neither Tertullian, nor St. Cyprian, nor Origen, nor any of the other ancient Fathers of the Church, who have expounded the Lord's Prayer, have read this conclusion in their manuscripts.

[11] This word is by its origin an adjective in the Hebrew tongue, signifying "sure," "assured," "certain." Taken adverbially, it is translated "surely," "in truth." It is thus used in the beginning of a discourse or of a clause in the Old Testament (*Jerem.* xxviii, 6), and much more frequently in the New Testament. At the end of a chant (*Ps.* xii, 14; xxii, 19; xxxix, 53), or of a prayer, and consequently in the present instance, it expresses the desire and even the certainty of seeing realised what has just been said. The Septuagint, in such cases, renders it by γένοιτο.

A short parable renders this conviction even more easily understood. "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves,[12] because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And if he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you: Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Thus, then, is God disposed toward the faithful one, who bears in his heart the grace and spirit of Jesus Christ. He approaches us so near as to become a friend Whom we can importune, and Whose hand we can force by our perseverance. The more deaf He seems to render Himself, the bolder should our persistence be. Ask, seek, knock, until the end is gained; such should be the gradation of our confident prayer. It exposes our needs, it seeks the gate by which to reach the heart of God, and, finding it, it knocks until God opens and shows Himself propitious to our desires.

In these conditions our prayer is always heard. Only, in our petitions, we must not go beyond the sphere which the Master has just traced. If man so far forgets himself as to ask for that which is not a real good, or for that even which would be an evil, God will not hear him. But

[12] This dialogue is most charmingly taken as spoken in the street. Of the three loaves one is for the guest, another for the host, and the third for the honour of the table.

by His knowledge of our true interests, and not for our inconsiderate desires, He Himself will choose that which will be most useful to us. In this way He often grants a prayer, although He seems to refuse. "And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion?[13] If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?"

This kindness of the Father was a consoling subject which Jesus especially loved to treat.

[13] Bread, hard-boiled eggs, and salt-fish constitute the ordinary food of travellers in the Orient.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION

The Signification of This Feast—Jesus in Solomon's Porch—He Is Besought to Explain Himself—Jesus' Response: "*I and the Father Are One*"—The Anger of the Jews at His Claim to Divinity—The Claim Ought Not to Worry Them; Why?—Nor the Fact—Jesus Asserts It a Second Time—He Escapes from His Enemies and Leaves Jerusalem. (St. John x, 22–39.)

As we have already observed, Jesus had another purpose in his visit to Bethany besides that of resting at the home of His friends. It was His desire to appear suddenly in the Temple once more, on the feast of the Dedication, as He had on the feast of Tabernacles.

With ceremonies that were much alike,[1] these two festivals lasted for eight days each. The present religious manifestation occurred in the latter part of December, the twenty-fifth of *Casleu*. Judas Machabeus had instituted it after his victory over the Syrians,[2] to commemorate the

[1] Thus there were general illuminations in commemoration of the lights of the golden candelabra and of the lamps which had been relit and kept by a miracle of which Josephus makes mention. (*Antiq.*, xii, 7, 6.) Hence the name τὰ φῶτα. It was more commonly called τὰ Ἐγκαίνια, the feast of the Renewal, or of the Reconsecration, with us the Dedication.

[2] *I Mach.* iv, 52 *et seq.*; *II Mach.* x, 5–8.

purification of the Temple and the restoration of the altar which had been profaned for six years by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was not necessary to go to Jerusalem to celebrate it, and strangers in that city were generally few in number on this occasion. The inhabitants of the Holy City were only the more eager for this reason to abandon themselves to noisy, patriotic demonstrations. Jesus knew in what circumstances He was going to appear, and He decided nevertheless to make another appeal to the people whom He desired to recover.

Therefore, during the course of the festival, He betook Himself to the Temple. It was bitterly cold, being in winter, and to keep warm He walked to and fro in Solomon's porch. This splendid ruin of the ancient House of God had withstood the Chaldean pillages, and, at the eastern extremity of the enclosure, it dominated the valley of Josaphat.[3] Traces of it, it is thought, may still be found in the enormous blocks of masonry which, immovable even to-day after so many disturbances, seem to recall the grand architecture of the great King Solomon, far more effectively than the precipitate endeavour of a scanty Israelite colony returning from exile with Zorobabel. For a while Jesus was alone. Those blessed days had long since passed when the crowds pressed about Him with an enthusiasm that often rendered them importunate. Now there was winter in men's hearts as well as in the atmosphere. The Jews, that is to say, the leaders of the hierarchical party, taking advantage of His isolation, suddenly surrounded Him. Their object was to let Him go only after He had been forced to explain Himself. After all, His enemies felt that He had been for some time the

[3] Josephus (*Antiq.*, xx, 9, 7) calls it στοὰ ἀνατολική. This precision as to place and time of scene continues to reveal an eye-witness in the author of the fourth Gospel.

great subject of public thought even in Jerusalem. His recent stay at Bethany, although marked by silence and meditation, might have served to make Him known to many who, up to that time, had been content to look upon Him with the prejudice of others. His friends had at every opportunity repeated His beautiful lessons of wisdom, zealously commenting on them in order to enforce belief in the possible coming of the Messianic era. Remembering His miracles, some said: "It may be He!" Others indignantly repelled the supposition. Passions were aroused for and against; and this serves to explain the eagerness with which the representatives of the religious authority, finding Him now almost alone, had hastened to surround Him.[4]

By cutting Him off from His disciples and from those who might espouse His cause, they seemed to hold Him already prisoner in the midst of them. Thus the scene quickly became one of extreme animation. With the first word they utter the Sanhedrists betray the general excitement of minds. "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense?" they exclaim; "if Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." In this demand for an explanation was there nothing more than insidious malevolence? Are we to recognise in it an accent of sincerity inspired by the circumstances and a real desire to see a new Machabeus crush the foreigner, purify the Temple, and purge the Holy Land of the Gentiles who defiled it? Either supposition is likely. Nevertheless, the second derives special probability from the fact that the Jews agree that grave thoughts occupy their souls with regard to Jesus: they no longer enjoy life; their uncertainty is become intolerable. Besides, with their false ideas as to the Messiah, the result of their questioning will remain the same whatever the sentiment

[4] The word ἐκύκλωσαν expresses well the movement effected by the Jews.

that called it forth. They desire a human, not a heavenly, Messiah. Jesus will be far from satisfying them. He can but maintain what He has said to characterise His mission and to bring to light His divine personality.

The memory of the feast of Tabernacles must still be fresh in the minds of all. Did He not at that time declare Himself to be the personification of the various types which, according to the prophets, the Messiah was to realise? What is that if not to affirm that He was the true Messiah? Therefore, to the pressing question, which they ask Him, He makes only this reply: "I speak to you,[5] and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me." In fact, it is useless to ask what they have heard repeated in so many ways, and what they may see in works which are as marvellous as they are numerous. But to believe and to see there is required simplicity of heart, purity of the moral eye, the laying aside of all pride and prejudice. Where the interior dispositions are wanting, neither the words nor the works of Jesus can bring conviction. The doubts of those who question Him have only one reason to explain them, and that is the evil disposition of their souls. "But you do not believe," says Jesus, "because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand." By returning thus, as He was wont to do, to His last discourse uttered on the feast of Tabernacles, He proves clearly that, since that time, He had not reappeared in Jerusalem. The Evangelist, too,

[5] There is a very delicate shade of meaning in these words of Jesus. Since they who question Him do not understand the word *Christ* in the same sense as He does, He is unwilling to reply simply: "Yes." On the other hand, since He is really the Christ, He cannot answer: "No." He therefore refers them to His former declarations.

takes pains to join both of Jesus' declarations together in order to inform the reader of the campaign undertaken by Him against His enemies in Jerusalem. The Master, therefore, briefly recalls what He had said concerning the Door of the fold, the true Shepherd, and His sheep. They who surround and interrogate Him are not of His flock; still less are they good shepherds; that is why they cannot hear His voice. In their breasts He perceives the hearts of wolves, and His impression of pain betrays itself forcibly in these words: "They shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand." He lacks neither courage nor strength; He lets the robbers know it. To defend them, He will give His life's blood, and in His love He will find an irresistible valour. "My Father, Who hath given Me them, is greater than all,[6] and no man shall snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one." It is a strong argument, for no one can deny that the Father is more powerful than even the fiercest wolves. And, since He has given His sheep to His Son, it is quite natural that He should guard them for Him, especially as He Himself has not renounced the enjoyment of them; the Son has received them only to purify them and to lead them back to Him more faithful. They were His yesterday; they are even more so to-day, since they are now more attached and dearer to Him. From this first point of view, the Father is the Son's natural ally against the enemies of the flock. But between them there is not merely a union of interests, there is unity of will, of power, of wisdom, in a word, of all the divine attributes, because there is unity of essence. Jesus's assertion is a whole theological thesis. In saying "I and the Father are one,"

[6] In this translation we follow the most probable reading. The manuscripts which have ὁ δέδωκέν instead of ὃς δέδωκέν, and μεῖζον in place of μείζων, followed by the Vulgate, create serious difficulties.

with the word *are* He indicates the distinction of persons, and with the word *one* the identity of nature. This, then, is the salient point of the discourse. Revealing His whole thought and the mystery of His person as Messiah, Jesus declares that He is Man-God.

The Jews understood Him better than the heretics of later times. The explicitness of such an affirmation seemed to them sacrilegious. There was no longer room for doubt; Jesus made Himself God's equal! This was an abominable crime and deserved immediate punishment.[7] They went in search[8] of stones with which to stone the divine blasphemer.

The Master was unmoved by their wrath. Alone in the midst of that angry crowd, He looked upon His adversaries with majestic calmness, and with one word caused the stones to fall from their hands. It proved that reason still has some power, even over furious men, whenever it retains sufficient calmness and force to make itself heard. "Many good works," He says, "I have showed you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me?" The truth is that it is not for His works but for His words that they wish to put Him to death. But do not His works, authorised by the supreme power of the Father, confirm His words? For two years has He been producing them as numerous as they are astonishing. The paralytic, the man born blind, and the many others were but eloquent witnesses doing homage to the truth of His teachings. But this testimony, instead of convincing the Jews,

[7] *Levit.* xxiv, 10.

[8] The first time (*St. John* viii, 59) they had found stones near at hand, and had only to seize them (ἦραν), since they were in the enclosure of the Temple, where the work of construction was still going on. Now they are in the peristyle, and they are obliged to go and seek them at a distance and bring them (ἐβάστασαν). Only an eye-witness could have put such shades of meaning into his story.

only makes them the more bitter. They reply: "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Their reasoning is false. They should stone Him as much for His works as for His words, for the former are the confirmation of the latter. If His words are blasphemous, His works must have been lies. The solidarity is too close to be misconstrued. If they stone Jesus because He says He is God, when He is not, they must stone Him, also, because He seemed to work miracles which, in reality, were not such; for no one can conceive that God really lent the assistance of His almighty power to a liar. Therefore, since Jesus has falsely mingled His name in His words, He has also falsely assumed His power in His works. The lie is in both, and they must stone the Thaumaturgus for His cures, as well as the Teacher for His discourses.

But the Master pursues this argument no farther, and, though He does not say that He is not God and that He has never pretended to be God, which would have at once dispelled the storm by clearing away the misunderstanding, He proceeds to prove to them by an *argumentum ad hominem*, changing the question somewhat, that they are wrong in being scandalised, and that, even were He not God, He could without blasphemy attribute this name to Himself on the authority of the language of Scripture. "Is it not written in your law," He adds, "I said you are gods? But if he called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" This was a reference to a well-known passage of the Psalmist,[9] and under the name of the *Law* He includes not only the five books of Moses, but

[9] *Ps.* lxxxi, 6, 7.

all the inspired writings which served as the religious and moral rule for the people of God. All these are for Him the Scripture whose authority He proclaims.

As a matter of fact, the real intention of the legislation of Moses was to demonstrate that certain personages, for example, the father, the judge, the prince, had received a communication of divine dignity, and were representatives of Jehovah. However, Jesus would not have found therein the name of God communicated to man. Hence He seeks His example in the more venturesome poetry of the Psalms. These sacred chants were, moreover, better known to all. Asaph, in his canticle, after having exalted the ideal greatness of the judges of Israel, denounces their profound unworthiness, and cries out: "You are gods, . . . but you, like men, shall die." But if the Scriptures do not blaspheme—and who would dare bring this accusation against them?—in giving the name gods to ordinary judges, because they make the application of the divine law, how is Jesus Christ a blasphemer in calling Himself God, He Who in this world is the very messenger of God? And He is such a messenger! Sanctified by the Father, that is, marked, separated,[10] destined by Him, He received His mission before all time! By that word Jesus hints at His pre-existence. For He does not say that He received His mission from God, which would be to confess inferiority, but that He has it from the Father, which again sets forth His divine nature. Whence it follows that the Father and the Son conferred concerning the Redemption of the world in the secret intercourse of their eternal life, and that the Father charged the Son with the restoration of that which Satan had destroyed.

Thus, having silenced His adversaries by proving their

[10] Such is the meaning of the word *sanctified*, according to the Hebrews. (*Jerem.* i, 5; *Ps.* xiii, 3.) It is confirmed by St. Paul. (*Rom.* i, 1; *Gal.* i, 15.)

inconsistency, Jesus returns to His true thought. He courageously acknowledges that He did declare Himself God, if thereby they understood the Son of God in the most direct and fullest meaning of the word; the Son, Who does not suppress the Father, Who implies Him, and Who is one with Him in the unity of nature, but in perfect distinction of persons. The Jews may object that the mission of which He boasts has not been proved. Jesus foresees the difficulty and solves it in advance by another appeal to His works. And so He comes back to the declaration of His divinity in terms quite as clear as the first time: "If I do not the works of My Father," He says gently enough to attract the most ill-disposed, "believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." The consequence of this new declaration is logical and instructive. If they lay aside all prejudice, and consent to judge Him Who speaks just as He is, they will perceive the Father manifesting Himself in Him with all his attributes. They will see them both joined in the most intimate communication of love. It is in virtue of this unity of essence that He declares Himself one with the Father. But, doing what the Father does, being in the Father, having the Father in Him, means simply that He is God.

The hope of a plausible explanation had, for a moment, checked the indignation of the Jews. Since this explanation only accentuates the first affirmation, their whole fury is again aroused. They would seize upon His person, drag Him out of the Temple, and exact justice for His blasphemy. But, while they were engaged in planning to lay hold upon Him, Jesus, by an act of His almighty power, or by the intervention of His followers, again escaped from their hands.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE ROAD BACK TO PERÆA

Jesus' Soul Is Filled with Indignation Against the Pharisees—An Occasion That Causes It to Burst Forth—Maledictions Uttered During a Repast at the House of One of Them—Grand and Beautiful Lesson to the Disciples in the Presence of the Multitude—What We Must and Must Not Fear—Jesus Refuses to Intervene in a Division of Family Goods—Parable of the Foolish Rich Man. (St. Luke xi, 37; xii, 21.)

Thus, with a past full of prodigies, which was His from Galilee to Jerusalem, with the guarantee of a life absolutely pure, when He declared Himself the Son of God, Jesus had succeeded only in scandalising the Jews, and in provoking their indignation to so great an extent that they had sought to put Him to death. Yet He was neither a fool nor a liar. Even though His perfect sanctity had not been there to declare it, the same conclusion must have followed from the sanction that God gave to His words. It were unreasonable, indeed, to admit that God should authorise by miracles the pretensions of an impostor or of a lunatic. Logically, therefore, His testimony, far from being rejected, should have been probed to its deepest meaning and accepted as a declaration from heaven.

The people, left to their own inclination, might, perhaps, have taken this course; but, managed by a sect, as powerful as it was adept, they promised to become as perverse as their leaders.

It was, then, on the heads of the latter that the great and awful responsibility rested. Thereby is to be explained the profound indignation stirred up in Jesus' heart by the attitude of the Pharisaical party. Evidently the storm could not fail to burst at the first opportunity. This opportunity was sought by the Pharisees themselves.

Jesus, leaving Jerusalem suddenly, turned toward Peræa, where His apostolate had been temporarily interrupted.[1] On the way He resumed the work of evangelisation. A Pharisee, having heard one of His discourses, invited Him to take His morning [2] meal at his house. This was the least important meal of the day, but the Prophet of Nazareth was merely passing through, and they had to take Him when they could.

At a moment's notice the host had gathered about his board several friends, members of his sect, and a few Scribes, who were more particularly desired, if the opportunity were offered, to cope with the youthful Master. Such extraordinary tales were told of the boldness of His principles that they had to expect anything and to have at hand legists who should be capable of silencing Him.

More particularly was it asserted that, although He spoke with unction the language of holy men, and even practised what He preached, He held the Pharisaical rites to be worthy of no esteem. Could He be really the man of God and scorn such sacred observances? And if He were not the man of God, how explain His incomparable

[1] *St. John* x, 40.

[2] This is the meaning of ἀριστήσῃ, which distinguishes the first meal of the day from the principal repast, δεῖπνον.

teaching and His transcendent sanctity? At the bottom of all these accusations was there, perchance, naught but the working of envy? The Pharisee was desirous of understanding it all.

The Master divined his intentions, and was not offended. With the best of grace He accepted his invitation. As He entered He could see that He was in the midst of enemies disposed above all to spy upon Him and to judge Him. But He was resolute in braving all the absurd prejudices of those with whom He was going to eat, and, in order to accentuate from the very beginning the difference in ideas that separated Him from them, He took pains to go through none of the ablutions customary among Pharisees in preparation for the repast. He went straight to the table, and took His place on the couch, without even washing His hands. The more ardent began to murmur against this audacious protest. For them not to wash the hands was the height of impiety. "It were better," said the Rabbis, "in times of persecution, to die of thirst than to die the eternal death, for neglect of the precept of purification; though the jailer should give but a drop of water, it were wiser to wash the hands therein, and then to eat without drink." [3] The master of the house now saw with his own eyes what he had so often heard said. Jesus might, indeed, be a teacher strong in words, and even irreproachable in His private life; yet in religion He was, none the less, a dangerous innovator, the destroyer of the law, and a peril for true believers. The impression of painful surprise which he experienced was deep. Though he had felt himself drawn toward the young Prophet, he now beheld himself suddenly cut off from Him by an abyss. But it was an abyss dug by Pharisaism. The Master was saddened by it more than he, and, letting forth from His heart

[3] *Erubin*, fol. 21, 2.

the bitterness that filled it, in a voice of holy anger He denounced under Heaven's curse the work of these hypocrites who robbed Him of souls under pretence of securing their salvation. This discourse was the prelude of the solemn anathemas which He was to proclaim later in the Temple, and which we shall analyse then all together, that we may lose nothing of their grandeur and awe-inspiring beauty.

In the meantime let us remark that now even the lesson was severe. "Now," said Jesus ironically, "you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within you are full of rapine and iniquity. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without, make also that which is within? But give generously that which is within,[4] and, behold, all things are clean to you." For God not only has a right to the worship of the body, He desires, above all, the homage of the soul. He created the latter as well as the former; and since, in the human dualism, the soul is the superior part, it is by the soul especially that God wishes to be honoured and served. When the soul is His, when it thinks, loves, and lives for Him, the body is sanctified. Exterior observances are nothing compared with this gift of the moral man. Jesus represents it here as alms, in order to manifest the need His Father has of being loved and glorified by us. A man, by the very gift of his heart, purifies all the works of his body. While, on the other hand, were he to give all the rest except his heart, he could produce naught but works of hypocrisy and crime. "Woe to you, Pharisees, because you tithe mint and rue, and every herb,[5] and pass over

[4] We have ventured to substitute here for the unintelligible rendering of the Rheims version the literal English equivalent of the French translation used by Mgr. Le Camus.—TRANSLATOR.

[5] The law (*Levit.* xxvii, 30; *Numb.* xviii, 21; *Deut.* xiv, 22) obliged every one to pay tithes of his harvests, as of grain, oil, wine, etc. The Pharisees,

judgment and the charity of God. Now these things you ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe to you, Pharisees, because you love the uppermost seats in the Synagogues, and salutations in the market-place. Woe to you, because you are as sepulchres that appear not, and men that walk over are not aware."

These accusations fell like flaming thunderbolts into the midst of the affrighted guests. One of them, a Scribe, thought it his duty to speak and to attempt, perchance, an apology. He only succeeded in drawing the formidable outburst more directly on the heads of the lawyers, his colleagues. He had said: "Master, in saying these things, Thou reproachest us also." The Scribes, in fact, almost all belonged to the Pharisaical sect, and they felt themselves insulted by this angry attack. "Woe to you, lawyers, also," cried Jesus, turning upon him. Then He stigmatised in turn their false zeal for the law; their enthusiasm in inventing new obligations which they imposed on others without binding themselves; their fanaticism, as redoubtable as that of their fathers against the envoys of God, and, in fine, the monopoly which they claimed of religious science, prohibiting the people from being instructed and themselves failing seriously to give instruction.

Then He arose and went out. The Pharisees remained at first in confusion, but they soon let forth their fury against Him Who had just treated them so harshly, and, in their anger, they sought to overwhelm Him with their shameful accusations. Pouring forth in a crowd into the street, as in formidable uprising,[6] they surrounded Him, laying snares for Him, each one spying upon His words

in order to be distinguished, went farther and meant to prove their piety by paying tithes on the most insignificant products, as mint, rue, anise, etc.

[6] The expressions used by the Evangelist (verse 54) give the idea of a hunt after a wild beast.

or His works, that they might officially bring judicial action and take their supreme revenge.

Thus, in Peræa, as in Jerusalem and in Galilee, this powerful sect, no longer concealing its hostility, looked only for an opportunity to put an end to Him. War was plainly declared and accepted on either side.

Jesus, accustomed to these threatening demonstrations, which were a continuation of those in the Temple, stood, calm and full of authority, in the midst of the crowd attracted by the noise of this violent scene. Severe in His majesty, He turned and said to His disciples: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." On other occasions He had pointed out this redoubtable enemy, but with closed doors, so to speak, and in private intercourse. But now He publicly unmasks and brands it loudly and pitilessly. "For," He says, "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hidden that shall not be known. For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness, shall be published in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in the chambers, shall be preached on the housetops." This free speech will, no doubt, give rise to danger; one cannot brave the wicked with impunity when they have brute force at hand; but what matters that? "And I say to you, My friends," Jesus goes on, "be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you Whom you shall fear; fear ye Him Who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him." There are, then, two deaths possible, death in time and death in eternity; for man has two lives, one which passes and one which shall never pass. If the first be taken, what has he lost? Nothing; it is a dream; the other only is the reality. The true evil would be, therefore, to lose this latter. It is lost when man is condemned to live

it apart from his beginning and his end, which is God. But he cannot be condemned to this punishment by the wicked, whatever may be their hatred; to the supreme Judge belongs the exclusive right to regulate our eternity in keeping with our works. The wicked can kill the body; we alone are masters of our souls, and it is in the fulness of our liberty that we prepare God's judgment.

This philosophy, which was to furnish the courage of martyrdom to future generations, was most beautiful in its simplicity. How often the victims have said to their torturers: "We fear you not. Seek you our blood? Behold it. Our souls still remain, and they are wholly ours. Think you to kill us? You give us life. Your power over us shall end with our last breath, and that same breath shall inaugurate our eternal freedom; against those who have departed this life you are powerless."

To this, the first and chief reason for fearing not, Jesus adds another: it is that nothing, even in this life, happens without God's permission. "Are not five sparrows," He says, "sold for two farthings,[7] and not one of them is forgotten before God? [8] Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." If Providence keeps watch over the little birds for which He provides food each day, how much greater reason He has to care for His children! If God knows the number of our hairs, it is a proof that He pays more heed to our bodies than we do ourselves.

[7] In the time of Cicero this farthing was worth about a cent and one-fifth of United States money. Two farthings were, therefore, equal to two and two-fifths cents. In the parallel text in *St. Matthew*, two birds are valued at only one farthing. This is somewhat dearer, perhaps, because five were proportionately cheaper than two. This, however, has no importance except in discussing certain theories on the absolute accuracy of the sacred writers.

[8] This expression *before God* betrays the Aramean source whence St. Luke borrows this passage.

Therefore, no man can put us to death without His knowledge and His will. But, if He wills it, it is for our greater good.

"And I say to you," Jesus continues, completing thus the argument that must sustain the courage of His followers, "whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God." The reward is well worth the martyrdom it shall have cost. Before the attentive and admiring assembly of heaven, Jesus shall acknowledge His own. What glory, then, for those valiant soldiers in being placed by their Chief in the ranks of the brave for all eternity! In spite of the most violent persecutions, they shall have proclaimed to all tyrants and to all executioners that Jesus was their Lord and their God; Jesus will declare before His Father and before the Angels that they are His friends forever. "But he that shall deny Me before men," adds the Master, "shall be denied [9] before the Angels of God." This suffices to make His friends courageous.

As He finished speaking,[10] some one in the multitude appealed to His authority in a matter that seemed to be of deep import to him. It was a question of family affairs. From the fact that Jesus had been able with impunity to overthrow His adversaries, and to impress His moral superiority upon the astonished crowd, this man thought that no one would dare to deny His judgment in the law case which He wished to submit to Him. "Master," he said, "speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance

[9] It has been justly remarked that in this case it is no longer the Son of Man Who directly intervenes, as when it was a matter of glorifying the faithful. The sentence is fulfilled of itself. The renegade finds in eternity that which he has freely chosen in time, separation from his Creator and his God.

[10] Verses 10, 11, and 12 are better placed in *St. Matthew*. We therefore suppress them here.

with me." What reason had the holder of the succession [11] for refusing to divide? There is nothing from which to tell. It is not even certain that this plaintiff had any real rights to enforce. It may be that he thought himself injured although the strictest justice had been observed. However that may be, Jesus was indignant at seeing him press his claim for half of a wretched succession on earth, when He was offering the whole of an incomparable inheritance in heaven. "Man," He said, "who hath appointed Me Judge or divider over you?" For it was not to busy Himself with earthly interests that the Son of God had clothed Himself with our humanity, and, if His disciples must not even take the time to regulate their family affairs, much less shall the Master deign to delay to discuss those of others. The request of this man, although paying homage to the superior authority of Jesus, issued from a most worldly heart; and hence the Saviour meets it with a response of holy indignation. The greatest danger to a soul is base cupidity, which pitilessly stifles in it all desire of divine truth.

The Master at once takes up this pernicious vice: "Take heed and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Thus, taking His stand at the same thoroughly human point of view as he who appeals to Him, He proceeds to prove to him that there is no need of great wealth in order to live, and that, even with great riches, no one can escape death. Why, then, permit avarice to take root in the heart, since all that there is of temporal goods cannot make life either happier or longer?

To make the truth of this lesson of wisdom easier to

[11] According to Moses (*Deut.* xxi, 7), the eldest son had a double share of the inheritance, with the obligation of caring for his mother and his unmarried sisters. The younger sons sometimes took their portion in money, and hence there might be motives for a revision of the sharing.

understand, Jesus employs the following parable: "The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits." The proprietor, surprised by this sudden and almost unexpected turn of fortune, at first experienced extreme satisfaction at the sight of such great riches. But these latter inevitably have their thorns, and it was not long ere he felt their points. Care always grows in direct proportion with the goods one owns. "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" He was engrossed with a multitude of plans; as if, when store-houses fail, there were not always the famished stomach of the poor, the hand of the widow, the mouth of orphans, to receive the superabundance of the harvest. But the rich man desired to become yet richer, and, at the end of all his reflections, the fortunate owner decided thus: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater; and into them will I gather the produce of my fields and my goods. And I will say to my soul"—the centre of his satisfaction, his joy, his affection—"Soul, thou hast many goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer." For the most part good fortune prepares the way to materialism, and nearly always begets a pleasure-loving generation as evil as it is stupid. What folly, merely because one is rich, to count on the future! We are not even masters of to-morrow. How ready we are to conceive long hopes and vast ideas! We wish to buy, to build, to lend, to restore, to be honoured, and, in the end, as the philosopher [12] says, after the works of a troubled life, to rest our old age in the comfort prepared by countless labours. How senseless! The man in the parable promised himself

[12] Seneca, *Epist.*, 101: "Emam, ædificabo, credam, exigam, honores geram; tum demum lassam et plenam sanitatem in otium referam!" This whole letter is worth quoting as a noble lesson of wisdom in a pagan.

the joys of prosperity unto extreme old age; but, in the very midst of the delightful dream which he cherished, the voice of God broke in to tell him that Heaven's decree was otherwise: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee." He had proudly said "my soul," as if that soul were his, and lo, suddenly it is to be taken from him. The illness that unexpectedly comes upon us is God summoning us and making known to us our sentence of death. Then the awful voice puts this question, which spreads a deep-felt bitterness through the heart of the dying: "And whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" In any case, they shall not be for him who has centred in them all his hopes. The rich man, snatched from earth and borne off to a world where material treasures may not follow him, in the poet's words, shall enter there naked and despoiled of all:

> Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas
> Nudus ab inferna, stulte, vehere rate.[13]

Ungrateful strangers, it may be a prodigal, will devour on earth what he was prematurely obliged to leave. "So," concludes Jesus, "is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Men want wealth for their comfort and their pride, but it eludes them. They who have sought it and possessed it only for God, acting here below as the representatives of His Providence, bear it away with them into the future life. The former, in the desire of keeping all, have lost all; while the latter, by giving all, have ended by retaining all.

[13] Propertius, iii, 5, 13.

CHAPTER VIII

LESSONS OF WISDOM AND EFFUSIONS OF PIETY

Teachings on Abandonment to the Paternal Kindness of God—Simple and Touching Reasons That Favour It—Our Treasure Should Be in Heaven —Another Series of Teachings on Christian Vigilance—Parable of the Servants Awaiting Their Master—The Son of Man Comes Like a Thief— Peter's Question — The Two Stewards — Jesus Utters the Thoughts That Oppress His Heart— The Flame Which He Is Come to Bring Into the World—The Hour of the Conflict Approaches— They Do Not Understand Him. (St. Luke xii, 22–59; St. Matthew vi, 25–33; vi, 19–21; xxiv, 43–51; x, 34–36.)

Here, according to St. Luke, is the natural place for a succession of holy counsels addressed by Jesus to His disciples, which St. Matthew has, for the most part, attached to other discourses.[1]

[1] Thus one part is found in the Sermon on the Mount (*St. Matt.* vi, 25–33; 19–21); another in the advice given to the Apostles (x, 34–36); another, in fine, in xxiv, 43–51. How explain this capricious distribution of fragments in *St. Matthew* and the general grouping in *St. Luke*, if they both drew from a common written source, or if they knew each other's Gospel? The hypothesis of an oral Gospel alone can solve the difficulty.

These recommendations are not for the multitude, like those that precede. They are addressed to the disciples.[2] One must have faith in order to comprehend and to consent to practise them. Let the world, with no thought of eternity, become attached to earthly goods; we can understand that. Heedless of any Father above, it constitutes a Providence unto itself. For believers, this cannot be. Their duty is to leave all and to go, without human aid, to spread the truth in the world, resigning themselves utterly to God's fatherly care for the needs of each day. Their wisdom consists in striving to make sure of eternal life, and in scorning all else. What persuasive charm and what sweetness in the words of Jesus, Who is about to demand from them the sacrifice of the closest ties and the heroism of the most complete self-denial!

"Therefore," He observes to them, "I say to you, be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat; nor for your body what you shall put on. The life is more than the meat and the body than the raiment." He who has given the greater gift, can well promise the lesser: if God has given life, He can sustain it, and if He has made our body, He can clothe it. That which costs us so much pain and worry to acquire, He gives as if unconscious of it. From His creating hands food and raiment come to beings who know not even how to ask them. For far greater reason shall all this be given to servants, to children who glorify their Father and place in Him their sweetest trust! "Consider the ravens,"—they certainly are not the most useful nor the most pleasing birds of the air, and for this reason, no doubt, the Saviour mentions them here—"for they sow not, neither do they reap; neither have they store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they!"

[2] *St. Luke* xii, 22, says so clearly: πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ.

God cannot assign to man a harder lot than to His smallest creatures. Let us never forget that.

Moreover, as it is wise to trust ourselves to Providence, Who, in the very nature of things, assists us, so it were the part of foolishness to count on our own activity, which, without God, would remain ever powerless. "And which of you," continues the Master, "by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If then ye be not able to do so much as the least thing, why are you solicitous for the rest? Consider the lilies,[3] how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. Now if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,[4] how much more you, O ye of little faith!" Thus the Master, with that delightful poetry innate in beautiful souls, borrowed from the flower that blossomed at His feet, from the bird that flew through the air, the most graceful images to throw into intelligible form the secrets of His divine philosophy. The argument, strong in its lovable ingenuousness, was irrefutable. The great king himself, who with his pomp had astonished the East, and of whom Israel always spoke as the most magnificent prince and the one most dear to national pride, Solomon, placed side by side with the red anemone or with the lily, spreading their corollas in the sunlight, was, indeed, but indifferently clad. The hands of the daughters of Tyre or of Sidon weaving

[3] We cannot say whether He speaks here of the white lily, which seems to have been somewhat rare in Palestine—(some, however, are found near Jaffa. See Strand, *Flor. Palest.*, though we have never seen any)—or of the red lily of which Pliny speaks (*H. N.*; xxi, 5), and which was less rare in the country. Perhaps Jesus meant simply the beautiful red anemone (*anemone coronaria*), which is the common flower of the country.

[4] In the East, for lack of wood, they heat their ovens with the tall grass from the field. These ovens, as is well known, are earthen pans of small dimensions.

his rich tunic were far below that infinite art with which nature forms the petals of the flower and arranges its shining stamens like a crown consecrating its royalty of the field. In spite of all the fuller's care, the tunic of the son of David had not the whiteness of the lily, and his purple cloak paled before the lively brilliancy of the anemone. Yet what efforts, what combinations, what researches for the clothing of the great king! While each day God, as if for mere amusement, clothes numberless flowers which with their beauty eclipse the most marvellous tissues of human industry. But these flowers have only a mediocre importance in the history of the world; man scarcely notices them as he treads on them, and to-morrow they become dry grass that is cast into the fire. If God creates, nourishes, and clothes the flowers, with so much care for the adornment of the earth, can we suppose that He will leave, hungry and unclad, man, who is His royal master-work here below, and who, knowing his Author, consecrates himself to His service?

"And seek not you," concludes Jesus, "what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; and be not lifted up on high. For all these things do the nations of the world seek. But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things." Thus authentically does He separate from incredulous Jews and ignorant Gentiles, who are the world, His disciples, who are the family of God, the privileged flock which He will tell in a voice of tenderness to advance along its way without fear of being abandoned.

"But," He exclaims, "seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Can the Father, Who to His own gives grace in time and glory in eternity, Who consequently gives Himself, forget to provide them their daily bread? No, He shall let them want for nothing. "Fear not, little flock,"

Jesus adds, with an affectionate glance at His group of faithful disciples, "for it hath pleased the Father[5] to give you a kingdom. Sell what you possess, and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth[6] corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The rule of Christian wisdom laid down by Jesus is summed up in this wise: thought of the goods of earth cannot check the flight of souls whom God invites to enjoy the goods of heaven. The true Christian must suppress these obstacles, but under conditions which are not the same for all. Thus for the first disciples the rupture is necessarily radical, and the Master's word binds literally. Summoned to announce the Gospel in the whole universe, the care of material goods would not be compatible with their Apostolate. The Christians of the future, on the contrary, are free not to attain this heroism of absolute renouncement. To have and to practise the spirit of detachment will be enough for them.[7] While the Apostles are bound by a precept, later generations shall be only counselled. This counsel shall oblige only a few privileged souls called by grace to give to the Church an example of the highest perfection. The Gospel contains commandments of which only the essence is permanent. The manner of their fulfilment varies. At one period in the history of God's Kingdom one must be able to cast aside everything to become a valiant soldier; at another he must know how to possess and dispense temporal goods for the care of the poor and the support of the Church.

[5] *Ephes.* i, 4–6.

[6] The Jews considered as a treasure not only gold and silver, but all precious objects which were stored away, such as grain, stuffs, etc. (*Gen.* xlv, 22; *Jos.* vii, 21, etc.), which the moth and weevil could injure.

[7] This is what St. Paul calls *having as if they had not.* (*I Cor.* vii, 29.)

Moral strength demands, at times, a human basis on which to rely.

When the hour was come, none of the disciples, save Judas, recoiled before the sacrifice of his little treasure. God had made them kings; they worried not about the care of raiment or of food, since they held a sceptre. Hastening over all the world, toward every form of civilisation or of barbarity, in the midst of a thousand perils, capable of the utmost devotion, they had but one passion, to carry on a warfare of the Word in order to save souls. The rest was nothing to them. Their hearts were above it.

After this Jesus was pleased to touch upon a more general subject, the application of which was universal, since it involved the question of the kind of vigilance that insures salvation. "Let your loins," He said, "be girt,[8] and lamps burning in your hands." Thus He expresses the foremost command in the Christian life. To be ever on the alert, ready to act for the glory of the Master, to bear the light of faith in the soul in order to direct one's works, this is the duty of the faithful servant. "And you yourselves like to men who wait for their Lord, when He shall return from the wedding: that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and, passing, will minister unto them.[9] And if He shall come

[8] The Orientals, wearing long, wide garments, are obliged to tuck them up about their loins when they wish to go on a journey or to fulfil some office that requires agility. (See *IV Kings* iv, 29; ix, 1; *Jerem.* i, 17, etc.) Horace, *Sat.*, ii, 8, 10, says: "Puer alte cinctus," and later: "Præcincti recte pueri comptique ministrant."

[9] That we may not be too greatly surprised by this demonstration of kindness, we must not forget that the lot of servants among the Jews was far from being as hard as among the pagans. On certain feasts they were invited to eat with their masters in order to share their joy. (*Deut.* xii,

in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." Their zeal may be laudable, but it must be acknowledged that it is rewarded beyond all expectation. They have watched until midnight and, perhaps, even until morning, with their garments tucked up, ready to hasten at the first sign of the Master. Lighted lamps were in their hands, and always alert, attentive to the slightest sound, unwearied, they awaited. It is a beautiful and charming picture of the just man, of the true servant of God, of the faithful disciple of Jesus, who, also, passes his life waiting courageously for the coming of the Master! It is after death that this latter comes every day. Later on He shall come solemnly in all His glory. Happy for having honoured Him by a correct life, by a virtue equal to any trial, the good servant, whom hope sustains and faith enlightens, cries out, at the first sound of knocking at the door: "Here am I"; and he opens. Death cannot terrify him, for it will bring him within sight of the Master. The latter appears, indeed, radiant; He comes from the great banquet prepared for Him by the Father in heaven. The faithful servant expects, as a reward for his watching, naught but the joy of having been pleasing to his Lord. Two words of approbation which he receives from His divine lips will be enough to make him forget all the weariness of the night. But the Master argues otherwise, for, if His servants are good, He is far more so. He seems even excessively good. In the satisfaction which He feels, He has suddenly thought of the most astounding of all

17, 18; xvi, 11, 12.) Some may find a contradiction between this passage and *St. Luke* xvii, 7–9, if they forget that here there is question of the Master's sentiments, whereas later there is question of the servant's. The former is pleased to indulge in the utmost generosity, while it is the duty of the latter to practise humility and to be conscious of his own inability when it is question of producing a work of merit.

rewards. Since these good people have exhausted themselves with so long a watch, He decides to have them sit at His table. This table is none other than the continuation of the banquet from which He Himself is just returning. For it was the custom among the Jews to offer to the guests a portion of the feast which they might take to their homes to continue the feast there, and thus extend the rejoicing to all their family. It is probably to eat these remains that the master invites his faithful servants, associating them, in a way, with the pleasure which he has had himself in being present at the nuptial banquet. Thus the elect, in return for their watchful fidelity, shall receive their share of the eternal banquet, and it is Jesus Himself Who, with most tender affection, will give them this sweet recompense. Such, under the imagery of the parable, is the astonishing history of heaven. Christ makes Himself the Servant of His servants, and fills them Himself with His own glory, thus rewarding a hundredfold their merits here below.

However, the master's coming might well appear to some to be anything but a signal for rejoicing. If they have not watched until the end, they have not fulfilled their duty; and, not having fulfilled their duty, they are in danger of experiencing bitter regret for their shortcoming; for the master may arrive at any moment. To test his servants, he will choose a time when he is not expected. "But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Be ye also ready, for at what hour ye think not, the Son of Man will come." The surprise would be disastrous, their failure irreparable; eternity is at stake.

Peter, thinking particularly of the reward promised to the faithful servants—he feels himself brave and loving

enough to be one of them—is anxious to know if all will be permitted to win it, or if this is to be the exclusive privilege of the Apostles. Conscious affection does not like to be confounded with that which is common. It is to a sentiment of natural vanity, or, perhaps, even of noble jealousy, that Peter seems to have yielded on this occasion. "Lord," he asked, "dost Thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all?" Can it be that every subject of the Messiah-King may strive for this reward of the watchful servants, or is it reserved only for the ministers of this King? They were the ministers; the subjects were all men. The Apostles, as we have seen more than once, looked for the *Parousia*, or the glorious return of Jesus to earth after a brief absence, without due regard to the many evidences that forbade them to see the proofs of its near approach[10] in the Master's declarations. It is easy to understand how it was that they took a deep interest in learning what would be the place each one would hold in the new Kingdom.

Jesus' intention was, indeed, to liken all the faithful to the good servants in the parable as regards merit and reward. In this the Apostles must consent to be ranked with the multitude of the Messiah's true friends, for their title of Apostles can not prevent others from loving the Master and serving Him with as great devotion as they themselves. The Master's women who are present, and the generous hearts of the Master's times, are to be none the less deserving of the terms of the same and of the favours of the Master, though they were not of the number of the Twelve. To all His faithful souls, whether they be of the ecclesias-

[10] To come *in the third watch* meant to come at the end of the night and consequently to inaugurate, after long centuries, the definitive reign of the Messiah over the Church triumphant and glorified. In the parable of the Virgins (*St. Matt.* xxv, 5) and in that of the Talents (*St. Matt.* xxv, 19) the Master also represents Himself as being looked for.

tical hierarchy or not, the Lord makes known His great satisfaction by admitting them to the same banquet. For the Apostles He has reserved, in addition to this, a degree of glory corresponding to the mission they shall have fulfilled in the Church. To their recompense as friends must be added another reward as founders of the Church. They have been friends and Apostles, faithful to God's grace in their private life, and no less faithful to their duties as shepherds in their public career: the Lord cannot forget that fact. Without appearing to have heard Peter's question, Jesus, continuing His discourse, answers indirectly.[11] "Who, thinkest thou," He goes on, "is the faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord setteth over his household to give them their measure of wheat[12] in due season?" Peter, conscious of his primacy, could not fail to say within himself that he first of all was this steward, and, after him, his colleagues in the Apostolate. For they have all received the mission of governing the Church and of distributing to it, regularly, the good grain of the divine word. "Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing! Verily, I say to you, he will set him over all that he possesseth." Such is to be the special reward of the Apostles in eternity. On twelve thrones, they shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

"But if that servant shall say in his heart: My lord is long a-coming; and shall begin to strike the men-servants and the maid-servants, and to eat and to drink and be drunk, the lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not,

[11] This was a common method with the Master. (Cf. *St. Luke* xix, 25–26; *St. John* xiv, 21–25.)

[12] Each servant received four or five bushels of wheat every month. The Romans made this distribution on the Kalends, and the Greeks on the last of the month. A special steward was placed in charge of this work.

and shall separate him,[13] and shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers." Such is the odious portrait and awful history of the minister who, forgetful of all his duties, under pretext that the Master will not come yet to examine his works, makes wrong use of his rights. Instead of nourishing souls and caring for them, he tyrannises over them. His personal passions, even the coarsest, he satiates with frightful cynicism. One would say that he no longer believes that the Master Whom he represents will ever return. It may be that his folly goes so far as to make him say: "He is dead. I am Master!" Great as it may be, the severity that shall come upon such a sinner shall be only too just. What comfort the souls of honest men shall derive from that wind-blast of divine justice that shall cast down the faithless one from the throne he has usurped, and hurl him, as St. Matthew says, to that place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!

"And that servant, who knew the will of his lord," continues Jesus, "and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more." Consequently, the dignity in virtue of which the Apostles are first and which, in fact, brings them nearer to the Mas-

[13] Interpreters are divided as to the sense of the verb διχοτομήσει, which, in its first acceptation, would mean "he shall cause him to be cut in two." This punishment, in fact, was not unknown to the ancients. (*Judges* xix, 29; *I Kings* xv, 33; Diodorus Siculus, i, 2; Suetonius, *Caligul.*, ch. xxvii; Horace, *Sat.*, i, 1, 100: "Securi divisit medium.") But, as the culprit is afterward placed in company with the wicked, we must suppose that he was not dead, and then the meaning of διχοτομεῖν would be a punishment which does not destroy life. It most probably indicates a violent tearing, consequently the punishment with the lash, in its most terrible form. (Arrian, *Diss. Epict.*, iii, 22; Hom., *Odyss.*, xviii, 345.)

ter than the rest of the faithful, will be for them the occasion of severer punishment, if it is not that of a more glorious reward. In this way Jesus encouraged them, and gave the others to understand that the first consequence of lofty dignity is an obligation to rise to more exceptional virtue.

Besides, the time would shortly come for the disciples to show each his real worth. The very avowal of their innocent pretensions naturally called up before the Master's eyes the prospect of the persecutions awaiting them. He beheld the fearful torments ready to be let loose, and His heart trembled for the poor flock that had to endure them. He saw Himself igniting the spark and knew already that He would be the first to be consumed. Then His words assumed a solemn tone, a deep emotion stirred His heart, and His divine soul felt the need of pouring itself out before His friends. "I am come to cast fire[14] on the earth," He said, "and what will I but that it be enkindled?" Like a daring hand that hurls into the midst of enemies the flaming brand that starts the conflagration and prepares the victory, the Son of God has sown the truth in the world, and, like a devouring flame, it is to invade all things and throw all things into confusion, in order to purify and save them. The burning will be sudden, universal, disastrous it would seem, terrible. Jesus knows it, but He hesitates not to burn all things in order to restore them. He Himself shall be the first victim; and this is another reason for wishing eagerly to see the ordeal begun. "And I have a baptism," He said further, "wherewith I am to be baptised; and how I am straitened until it be accomplished!" So, then, all the woes of the Passion are

[14] Inasmuch as the word contrasting with this fire, according to verse 51, is *peace* (εἰρήνη), and its synonym is *division, discord* (διαμερισμός), we cannot take this as meaning the fire of divine love.

before Him; He looks upon them as upon a horrible river [15] of blood and ignominy through which He must pass. His soul shudders at the sight, but it is His duty to be the first on the way of the martyrs. He will not fail. Let His disciples follow in His steps.

"Think ye," He exclaims, turning toward them, "that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against his father, and the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." And such, in truth, was the sad history of mankind during three centuries. The Christians fought against error, immorality, vice, with no arms but their faith, their justice, and their charity. The pagans struggled against light, truth, and virtue, and to stifle them they had at hand brutal force, and they made use of it. In spite of the voice of blood, the Christian daughter and son said to father and mother: "I cannot stay by you, for I abominate your false gods." And the father and the mother replied: "To the beasts, to the stake, to the torture with Christians, be they our own children!" The separation could not be more radical, and the history of the crimes to which it drove the pagans is as heart-rending as the story of the scenes in which is set forth the courage of our Christian heroes is consoling.

The disciples sought to reassure themselves by supposing that these terrible predictions referred to a distant future. Once again they were mistaken. Any man of clear vision could not but see that the awful hour was about to strike. The multitudes themselves must be warned of

[15] *Ps.* lxviii, 2, 3; *Isa.* xliii, 2.

it. Turning, therefore, to the people, He added: "When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say: A shower is coming; and so it happeneth. And when you see the south wind blow, you say: There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heavens and of the earth; but how is it that you do not discern this time?" The religious crisis is come; the breaking up is already begun; it is seen in families, among the people, in Jerusalem; in less than three months Jesus shall be its patient victim, for it is above His head first of all that the storm shall burst, and they discern it not! How is it that they cannot see that all the wrath of the Sanhedrim must end in the Cross, and that after the Cross will come their own ordeal? They discern, however, the rain behind the cloud as it rises from the Mediterranean, and the burning heat that follows the simoon from the desert. What inconsistency is this that renders them blind in religious matters, they who are otherwise so clear-sighted in the natural order of things? They cling to their illusion in believing that the Messiah is advancing to a triumph and not toward death, that they themselves are marching on to the conquest of the world, to wealth and glory. Events are destined to undeceive them.

Willing or not, these solemn words brought before the minds of all the dark prospect which Jesus would not allow to disappear. A painful impression of sadness came upon their souls, and, imperceptibly, the idea of the Messiah suffering held their attention.

CHAPTER IX

OTHER CURES ON THE SABBATH-DAY —A DINNER AT THE HOUSE OF A PHARISEE

JESUS IS WELL RECEIVED IN PERÆA—HE THERE AGAIN MEETS THE PHARISEES WITH THEIR SCRUPLES ABOUT HEALING ON THE SABBATH — THE WOMAN "BOWED TOGETHER," AND THE APOTHEGM ON THE ASS AND THE OX LOOSED FROM THE MANGER—THE DROPSICAL MAN IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE—WISE LESSONS REGARDING THE DESIRE FOR THE FIRST PLACES — THE GUESTS WHOM IT IS BEST TO INVITE, AND THOSE WHO ARE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ETERNAL BANQUET—THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER. (St. John x, 40–42; St. Luke xiii, 10–17, and xiv, 1–24.)

THE fourth Gospel tells us that Jesus "returned beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising first, and there He abode" for some time. The Apostolate which He at once resumed was not without success. In that place John the Baptist had aroused and taught the multitudes, and the memory of his vehement preaching was still fresh. When they beheld Jesus near at hand and heard His discourses, they said to one another: "John indeed did no sign; but all things, whatsoever John said of this man, were true." The herald had faithfully accomplished his mission and the people readily glorified him for it. God had sent him

only to speak. He had spoken well, since events agreed with what he had foretold.

Many, therefore, believed in Jesus.[1] For a moment He seemed to be experiencing again the best days of His ministry in Galilee. The Master set out, as before, on His journey through the towns near the Jordan; in each place He healed the sick and exorcised demons.[2] From admiration the multitudes quickly advanced to an enthusiastic faith. The word of God was working deep in their souls; and if, from time to time, the Pharisaical faction ventured to raise its head, it was only with timidity. They perceived that in Peræa they were on ground less subject to their influence, and Jesus had nothing to fear from their homicidal plots. He could with impunity even attack and, as often as the opportunity offered, ridicule them by retorts which, owing to their vivid sarcasm, entered deeply into the minds of all.

As is well known, healing on the Sabbath-day was an ancient problem on which the wisdom of the Pharisees had engaged in debate on several occasions, as well in Jerusalem as in Galilee. Seeing this famous theological difficulty, a veritable obsession for the Rabbis, reappear at this time, one would almost have a right to be astonished at the blind obstinacy which repeatedly brought it forth, did he not know how deeply rooted are the prejudices of sect in vulgar and unperceiving souls. Moreover, it may be that Jesus Himself sought these occasions to throw discredit on His adversaries by stigmatising them on a point so palpably absurd.

Thus, one day, while He was preaching in a Synagogue, He noticed in the crowd a poor woman, whose suppliant air, fervent devotion, and, in particular, most painful infirmity, rendered her remarkable. She was bent double,

[1] *St. John* x, 42. [2] *St. Luke* xiii, 32.

unable to stand straight or to look up. This physical condition was due to a supernatural cause. The Evangelist tells us that a spirit of infirmity, or demon of ill health, had taken possession of her, and held her thus in subjection. Was it directly upon her nerves that the demon exercised his power; had he bound her muscles, or did he reach her physical being only by exerting his influence over her soul? It matters little. Her weakness was extreme, and the woman had endured this affliction for eighteen years.

Jesus was filled with pity for her. He summoned her to come near, and said to her: "Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity!" These words immediately brought back to the infirm woman's will the energy which the demon held in suppression. At the same time the divine touch placed her organism again under the empire of that will, for Jesus laid His hands upon her. She at once stood upright and, with her heart full of joy and gratitude, she glorified God.

Naturally such a cure, effected on the Sabbath-day, in the crowded Synagogue, would cause scandal to a certain extent, for there were there, as in every religious assembly, some strict observers of the Pharisaical prescriptions. The ruler of the assembly no doubt discerned in the faces of some a painful impression, overheard certain murmurings, and at once turned his attention to the matter. Not daring to address Jesus directly, he caused the whole burden of his displeasure to fall on the multitude. "Six days there are wherein you ought to work," he exclaimed; "in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day." Our Lord [3] perceived the blow aimed at

[3] The Evangelist here calls Jesus ὁ Κύριος to proclaim His omnipotence. This title is rarely given Him, and then only in circumstances that display His sovereignty over nature, the elements, life, and death.

Him over the heads of the people, and responded: "Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you on the Sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead them to water?" He spoke to all those formalists whose sentiments the ruler of the Synagogue had expressed. "And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?" This was direct and positive. Through this picturesque comparison the reasonableness of Jesus' conduct was clear to the eyes of all. They loosed the ass and the ox and led them from the manger to the watering-trough, and a daughter of Abraham was to be neither delivered from her sufferings nor withdrawn from the hands of the demon in order to be led back to health! The ox and the ass waited for their time to drink only from the evening before, and this wretched woman awaited her cure for eighteen years! The voice of common-sense, when it bursts out with this warmth, and in such telling form, excites the admiration of an audience and insures the humiliation of the gainsayers who, suddenly abashed, find nothing further to reply.

That is what happened in the present instance, for, while the people in triumph rejoiced at the sight of the Saviour's glorious work, the Pharisees held their peace. Unfortunately, although defeated once again, they were only the more incorrigible and the more obstinate.

Some time later on, in fact, one of the most influential [4] among them invited Jesus to dine with him. It was again the Sabbath-day. Personally, he might have had only the best intentions with regard to the Master; but several of his friends, Pharisees like him and among the most rigid,

[4] We cannot say whether St. Luke meant, by the words *τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν Φαρισαίων*, a leader of the sect—for which we would have to suppose an organised hierarchy—or a member of the Sanhedrim, or simply a ruler of the Synagogue.

who were invited to this repast, had determined maliciously to watch the illustrious guest and to criticise His actions as well as His words. He paid but little attention, as we have seen, to this espionage, and readily threw Himself into the snares which His adversaries had set for Him, for the pleasure of victoriously destroying them. On entering He beheld in His path a wretched dropsical man, brought there by those who meant to put Him to the test. Without further prelude, the Master addressed Himself at once to the lawyers and to the Pharisees, and said: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" Whether it be that they felt themselves incapable of coping with the young Doctor, or that through a sense of fitness they were unwilling to raise a conflict in the house to which they had been invited and thus disturb the feast, they made no response to His appeal. In the depths of his heart, however, each one said: "No, it is not permitted."

Jesus, hearing their secret reply, takes the sick man by the hand, heals him by this simple touch, and dismisses him. It would have been difficult to correct the prejudices of the Pharisees with greater moderation or authority, since, here again, a miracle came to the support of the teaching. Without any excessive use of His triumph, the Master was content to resume, with a slight variation, the argument with which He had already silenced His adversaries. "Which of you shall have his son [5] or his ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day?" But this dropsical man, too, is stifled by the water that pervades his organism. What! shall the ox be dragged out of the pit to be saved from drowning, and shall not a man be delivered from the illness that is choking him? There was nothing to reply, and all, thankful

[5] Many manuscripts have *ὄνος* instead of *υἱός*.

that they had not engaged in the discussion, continued to hold their peace.

In the meantime the hour to sit at table had come. As we have observed, every Pharisee was, in reality, intensely proud. This pride ordinarily asserted itself whenever there was question of precedence. Narrow minds find it difficult to yield place and to pay homage to the excellence of others. Thus the Pharisees had a special liking for the foremost places, either at table or in public assemblies.[6] The presence of Jesus did not contribute to render them more circumspect. On the contrary, since they all had begun, with detestable haste, to seize upon the first seats, it is probable that the master of the house had to interfere and rebuke some of them in order to enforce the rights of others. It was a good opportunity to give these vain sectaries a useful lesson. The Master grasped it. He loved, besides, to sanctify such feasts by seasoning them with a few profitable maxims for those present. "When thou art invited to a wedding," He said, "sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him, and he, that invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give this man place; and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place, that when he, who invited thee, cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee."

The host, in restoring the order he desires, must inevitably have recourse to a certain excess in which pride, it seems, is sure to find its punishment and modesty its reward. For, when he determines to interfere, the middle places at the banquet are already taken, and then, not to

[6] They will be reproached with this caprice later on. (*St. Luke* xx, 46.)

disturb all the guests, he at once calls to the first place him who was in the last, even though he may not be the most honourable of the assembly; on the other hand, the first becomes the last, although, in consideration of his relative worth, he should have had a place in the middle. Thus it happens in human society. A vain man, although possessed of some good qualities, always deems himself appreciated at less than his worth. On the contrary, our idea of a humble man is almost always above his true merit. Hence, were humility nothing more than a virtue of prudence, we ought to practise it for our own advantage. But, from the supernatural point of view, its rôle is decisive in another way. It is the indispensable virtue for him who wishes to enter and take his place in the new kingdom. There, in fact, suddenly transferred by a word from the Supreme Judge, children become the first, and great men, in their pride, the last. God makes humility the stepping-stone to His grace, and pride the stumbling-block in the way of His mercy. This is expressed in Jesus' words as He sums up His whole thought: "Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

To this first advice given to the guests, the Saviour soon adds another, which directly interested the host. With one glance at the guests He had seen that they all belonged to the wealthy upper class. It would therefore be easy for each one, in taking leave of his host, to thank him by giving, in return, an invitation in the near future. He alone has nothing to offer but His gratitude. Who knows, even, that they did not politely force Him to part from His disciples in this brilliant assemblage? It may be that the Pharisee saw in these poor Galileans nothing but men in whom distinction of mind did not, as it did in their Master, overshadow their humble condition and

their obscurity of birth. Jesus did not refuse the invitation on that account—He goes wherever the glory of His Father calls Him—but He keeps in His heart the affront given to His own, and in a benevolent way He addresses this salutary lesson to His host: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper," He says, "call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours, who are rich, lest, perhaps, they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But, when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just." To give a feast to those who must return it later is mere investment and commercialism. To invite those who can do nothing for us is charity. To be sure, it is not wrong to receive our relatives and friends at our homes, but it may be perfectly useless before God and for the future life. To nourish the poor, on the contrary, is always a good thing, and the eternal reward of a good work is assured us. It were difficult to imagine a more amiable or more delicate manner of telling the Pharisee that He, the Master, poor amid them all, reserved until later on in Heaven the return to His host of the invitation He had received from him on earth. This expression of gratitude was not to be disdained.

On hearing these words, one of the guests exclaimed: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread[7] in the Kingdom of God!" This exclamation might have been inspired by a lively and enthusiastic faith, or merely by a desire to lead the young Galilean Doctor into a conversation that would be more and more instructive. Jesus did not leave it un-

[7] *Φάγεται ἄρτον* is the translation of an Aramaic expression used in the Orient in the sense of "taking a meal."

answered. He resumed His discourse and demonstrated that it was not enough to know that they are happy who go to sit at the banquet of the Kingdom, but that each one individually must strongly desire to participate therein. That is what the Pharisees and the other Jews neglect. They were, however, the first to be invited, and for their hesitation they shall not arrive even the last. In their place, the poor shall come in crowds to be installed. Thus will it be given to these unfortunate ones who shall have become the necessary guests at the eternal banquet, to there receive their benefactors.

"A certain man," said Jesus, "made a great supper and invited many." This man or host is God. The multitude of those invited represents the Jewish people, who were the most advanced, the most religious, and apparently the best prepared to receive the Messianic Kingdom. "And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready." It might seem strange to see the table ready, the meats served, and the guests absent. Such, however, was the history of the Kingdom of God in the midst of Israel. In vain had the prophecies, in the fulness of time, one by one received their manifest accomplishment; the invited had remained deaf to the call of the Lord. The banquet of truth and love prepared for them was without its guests. Such indifference would have exhausted man's kindness; it does not discourage the charity of God. After so many unprofitable advances, God determines to try a final one which shall be decisive. At the very moment when all is ready, He sends His servant, John the Baptist, or, better still, His own Son, Who assumes the form of His servant,[8] to announce solemnly that it is time to come and gather round the Father at table. Such great

[8] *Philipp.* ii, 7.

condescension seemed suited to arouse the ill-mannered laggards. But, now behold, one after the other, as if by agreement, they all invented various excuses and declined the invitation. An analysis of the motives alleged is quite interesting. Human nature is revealed in them with the succession of obstacles which it always raises against the impulse of grace.

"The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused." Vanity inflates souls and turns them away from God. This man is proud of his acquisition. He has a country-seat; he must go and inspect it; in his pride he is impatient to know if his domain will properly proclaim his fortune, his distinction, his power.[9] "And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused." This time it is the thought of earthly things, avarice that speaks. The heart that is attached to matter has no longer a taste for spiritual goods.[10] Instead of hastening to receive the word of life, this proprietor finds it more advantageous to go and try whether his new teams may not furnish better work for his lands and a surer income for his cupidity. "And, finally, another said: I have married a wife, and cannot come." The others had refused with some sense of fitness. This man, as brutal as the passion that detains him, declares without further form of politeness that he *cannot come.* The obstacle is too great, a woman! He must belong to her before all; he will see about listening to God later on, if he have time. Thus concupiscence, under the threefold form and by diverse excuses, keeps from the spiritual banquet the invited guests whom the Lord awaited.

[9] "In villa empta," says St. Augustine, "dominatio notatur; ergo superbia castigatur." (*Serm.*, cxii, 2.)

[10] "Amor rerum terrenarum viscum est spiritualium pennarum. Ecce concupisti, hæsisti." (St. Aug., *ibid.*)

These answers, which were reported by the servant, deeply incensed the master of the house; but he quickly decided on his line of conduct. Determining never to receive as guests any who betrayed such ill-will, he said to his servant: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame." This substitution is somewhat surprising. The unfortunate take the place of the rich and happy in life. Sinners, publicans, women of sinful lives come to participate in the banquet, from which the Pharisees had the misfortune to cause their own exclusion. It is true that, in spite of their faults, these sinners also were by birth children of Abraham. The invitation has not as yet passed the confines of the land of the Israelites. The servant gathered together this second class of guests within the boundaries of the city. But this requisition, although more profitable than the former, has not filled the banquet-hall. "Lord," said the servant, "it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Can it be that the poor among the Jews, also, had in part declined the divine invitation, or were they too few in number for this great banquet? The Gospel does not say.

Grace, like nature, abhors a vacuum. So, for the third time, therefore, does the master give orders to his servant. "Go out," he said, "into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." We, the children of the Gentiles, were among those mendicants who were wandering aimless, houseless, and hungry along the highways of the world, who lay in idleness behind the hedges, in the shame of undisciplined lives, like vagabonds; and the servant of God, Jesus Christ, came in the person of the Apostles to invite us to the feast, to force us, to oblige us to take our seats there. We must not take the Master's words in this sense, that violence should be done

to these wretched people; violence is not a means employed by God, for it would do away with liberty. Moreover, notwithstanding the absoluteness of the command, "*Compelle intrare*," it is clear that a single servant would not be able to insure its fulfilment. The thought of him who is absolutely desirous of guests is that none would be able to resist the solicitations of his emissary. Persuasion is sometimes a kind of moral compulsion. Truth made to shine in man's eyes is an irresistible attraction; beauty held out for his love transports him in spite of himself; goodness by which he is charmed binds him and draws him on by the stoutest of chains. He advances, then, as if pushed by main strength, although in reality he is free not to do so. He who, by a sudden blow, has just aroused him from his torpor, or who has conquered his last scruples, has really compelled him to enter, not by doing him violence, but by determining his will. Such is the real meaning of the divine word which human passion may have mistaken, but which the true Christian spirit will ever re-establish for the honour of the Church and of liberty.

It was nineteen centuries ago that this multitude of mendicants heeding the Apostles' voice came and unconsciously filled the banquet-hall. The world must exist as long as the number of guests required by divine wisdom remains unrealised. God will not be glorified by an incomplete and diminished family. Whatever the number of the reprobate, that of the elect, therefore, must still be very great. When every vacant place shall have been occupied, God will close the door, and the banquet of eternity will begin.

Having spoken thus, Jesus cast a glance over those who surrounded Him, and, as if to let them know the part which He and they had in the parable, He added, with a tone of severity: "But I say to you, none of those men that

were invited shall taste of My supper." These words are pronounced, it is true, according to the text, by him who gave the banquet; but Jesus, identifying Himself with this host whose self-love is hurt, applies them to Himself, and thus clearly proclaims that He is the Master of the feast.

CHAPTER X

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT, AND THE REPROBATION OF ISRAEL

Is It the Minority That Shall Be Saved?—The Real Gate Is Narrow—The Wide Gate Exists Only in the Imagination of Sinners — Woe to the Jews Who Shall Have Remained Outside, and Who Should Have Been Within—Tidings from Jerusalem — There Are Greater Criminals than the Galileans Massacred by Pilate or the Jews Destroyed by the Tower of Siloe — God's Justice After His Mercy—The Parable of the Barren Fig-Tree. (St. Luke xiii, 22–30, and xiii, 1–9.)

St. Luke observes, at this point, that Jesus continued to visit the cities and towns, instructing the people and gradually approaching Jerusalem. As there were still two months before the Paschal feast, the Master intended to utilise them in evangelising the districts beyond the Jordan. He, therefore, resumed His journeyings hither and thither throughout Peræa,[1] pausing to scatter the good seed and establish the Kingdom of God in the hamlets as well as in the great centres.[2] The scenes and the discourses that follow bear so great a resemblance to those of the Galilean ministry that many have thought it right to

[1] This is the meaning of διεπορεύετο. [2] The text is κατὰ πόλεις καὶ κώμας.

assign them to that epoch. But it is evident that St. Luke assigns them to a later date, at the time when Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem.

During one of these Apostolic journeys, and probably at the close of the discourse on the Banquet of Eternity and the rejection of those who had been invited first, some one among His disciples, broaching the question in a general way, asked: "Lord, are they few that are saved?"

Even to-day theologians discuss this question with interest. Happily, it is not necessary to solve it in order to be saved one's self. Hence, Jesus, instead of replying to it directly, transfers it from speculative grounds to the more profitable ground of individual practice, where it must needs be kept. "Strive to enter by the narrow gate," He says, "for many I say to you shall seek to enter and shall not be able." [3] The Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven has only a small entrance; hence the mistake of many. They count on entering easily and, as it were, in triumph, without any sacrifice of their proud pretensions, of their passions, of their riches, and they await the opening of the massive gates to pass through with all their train of vanity. They will await long. While they stand there, full with vain desires, eternal victims of a sad illusion, the most courageous and most clever enter by the lower gate after achieving a victory over their flesh, their concupiscence, and their pride. Thus is humanity divided into two classes: the one that of the blind, who stand before an entrance always closed, since it is only imaginary, and the other, that of the prudent, who, with resolution, rush on through the narrow but real

[3] It is well to notice the words employed by Jesus: on the one hand *ἀγωνίζεσθε*, indicating the energy, the effort, the serious struggle by which alone one can succeed in gaining entrance into the Kingdom; and on the other *ζητήσουσιν*, showing the desire without the endeavour necessary for success.

gate, and, crowding over its threshold, all eager to be the first to enter. It is in consequence of this deplorable error that the great number will be excluded from the Kingdom. "But when the Master of the house shall have gone in, and shut the door . . ." This figurative language proves more directly here that He speaks of the mysteries of the life to come.

Besides, the Kingdom of God on earth becomes, through death, the Kingdom of God in heaven, and the same laws govern the one and the other in different spheres. The Master, Who shall go in, is God Himself, bringing to an end the state of probation for mankind, for a nation, or for a single soul. At that moment, the time of grace shall be passed; the small gate itself shall be closed, and the foolish ones, suspecting at last their illusion, shall in vain rush on to gain an entrance; it will be too late. "You shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And He, answering, shall say to you: I know not whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. And He shall say to you: I know not whence you are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Thus, the reign of mercy having come to a close, the Saviour will no longer know any but the just and the sinners, the former of whom sought their redemption under the most severe conditions, while the latter dreamed of it and vainly awaited a method that might be easier and more glorious in appearance. Then the external and transitory relations that formerly bound us to Him will be as nothing. Only the closest bonds, an irrevocable alliance through faith and works of penance, will have an eternal value. He will recognise those who have given themselves to Him without reserve; of the rest He will know but one

thing, namely, that they belong to the party of Satan, and He will cast them forth to the master whom they have chosen. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," continues Jesus, "when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Nothing can equal the long-drawn cry of anguish that will escape from these foolish men, thus deceived for all eternity. A horrible fear shall seize upon their whole being, caused by a despair as fruitless as it is belated. They who loudly boasted that they were the sons of the patriarchs and of the prophets will behold themselves forever separated from their fathers. And—another detail that will add to their woe —as they look upon the society of the elect, they will notice that their place is not empty. For it shall be occupied by the Gentiles whom they so despised. "They shall come," Jesus goes on, "from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God." The picture of the banquet reappears here quite naturally, since it is this that still occupies the minds of the disciples. It portrays the happiness of heaven. There, Jews and pagans in union with the Messiah shall be seated at the same table, happy in their eternal brotherhood. They alone shall not be brothers who shall not have accepted the Redemption. But the majority of the Jews will have been guilty of this folly. So, by a catastrophe which the Jews had not foreseen, the pagans who were the last summoned to the Messianic Kingdom shall become the first, and the sons of Abraham, who were inscribed on the first line in the decree of the Redemption, will so surely be the last that the vast majority [4] of them will have no part whatsoever therein.

[4] The text does not say that all the last shall be first, nor that all the first shall be last; it only mentions some of the last and some of the first: *καὶ ἰδοὺ εἰσὶν ἔσχατοι οἳ ἔσονται πρῶτοι*, κ. τ. λ.

At this moment some one brought from the capital the saddest of news. By Pilate's order, certain Galileans had just been massacred in the Temple,[5] and the people in horror, beholding their blood mingled with that of the victims, concluded, no doubt, that these unfortunate beings, of whose fault [6] we are ignorant, must have been indeed guilty, since God had suffered them to be massacred at the very time when they were offering their sacrifices. Jesus listened to the various opinions; then suddenly, without dwelling on this incident, because in the near future His prophetic glance beheld more awful catastrophes, He said: "Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they have suffered such things? No, I say to you; but unless ye shall do penance ye shall all likewise perish." He saw, forty years from that time, the remainder of his faithless fellow-countrymen falling in multitudes in that same Temple in Jerusalem, beneath the swords of the soldiers of Titus. The final destruction of the nation would then prove that there are criminals more culpable than the seditious, namely, unbelievers, and that there is a kind of rebellion more detestable than that which attacks the power of man, namely, that incredulity which takes up arms even against the authority of God. It may be that there was a malicious and scarcely disguised motive in the haste with which they told Jesus the news

[5] Profane history has kept no trace of this frightful massacre. All those of which Josephus speaks took place at another time or elsewhere than at Jerusalem. But it is easily seen how such an act of severity, quite in keeping with Pilate's character, might be effaced beneath the rigour of this procurator's administration in other matters. The Galileans, for their part, were sufficiently rebellious and hostile to carry even into the Temple the noise of their political or religious quarrels. (*Antiq.*, xviii, 9, 3, etc.)

[6] It is supposed that they had fomented a revolt, and that Barrabbas (*St. Luke* xxiii, 19) was one of their partisans. It was, perhaps, on the occasion of this summary execution of Galilean subjects by Pilate that a disagreement arose between Herod and the representative of Roman authority. (*St. Luke* xxiii, 12.)

of that day. The Galileans, His compatriots, were also His followers and His most faithful friends. Quite naturally, then, and, as if He attached no importance to it, He reminds His questioners of another catastrophe that occurred in Jerusalem, and in which Jews, and not Galileans, had been the victims. "Or those eighteen," He says, "upon whom the tower fell in Siloe,[7] and slew them; think ye that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but except ye do penance, ye shall all likewise perish." Therefore, be they Israelites of Galilee or of Judea, more reprehensible than the victims of this latest massacre, since it is even God's Kingdom that they in their obstinacy reject, they call down upon their heads the most frightful calamities. They shall fall, not beneath the blow of human vengeance, or of an unfortunate accident, but under the blade of divine justice. Their blood shall inundate the sanctuary; they and their children shall be mercilessly crushed beneath the stones of the edifice, while the Messiah exacts supreme vengeance for their infidelity, on the day of His final coming. Then shall He bruise His enemies with the rod of His anger, and immolate them as woful victims beneath the strokes of His inexorable justice. Nothing can account for the severity of the future better than the mercy of the present. The patience of the Lord is long-enduring, and the resistance of His creatures most inconceivable.

Such is the thought developed in the following parable: "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard." The example is taken from a very ordinary sight on the

[7] This tower was probably that which guarded the gate of the great wall to the south-west of the pool of Siloe, the foundations of which have recently been excavated by Mr. Bliss. This gate must have been rebuilt three times, since different thresholds are still to be seen. It is impossible to say whether the Jews who were crushed to death were engaged in any particular work of construction, or simply chatting and selling their wares, as is done even to-day at the gates of Oriental cities.

rocky hillsides of Palestine, when the proprietor endeavours to cultivate other fruits than the grape in his vineyard. The vineyard is the whole world, in the midst of which, like a fig-tree of great promise, was planted the Jewish people. "And he came seeking fruit on it and found none." The fruit of a tree indicates the abundance and quality of its sap. Thus the works of men reveal their moral value. God the Father looks for the fruits borne by the Jewish people, and He finds among them none or only evil works. It is impossible, even for His divine eye, to discover in this wicked race anything that may respond to His hopes. Then He says to the dresser: "Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none." Do these three years represent the law of nature, the law of Moses, and the law of grace, or, better, the time of the public life of Jesus Christ? Both of these explanations have been put forward by interpreters. But, while in the first it is difficult to find the meaning of the fourth year of respite granted to the Jewish people, in the second, it may be said with some semblance of truth that this reprieve given to the fig-tree corresponds with the time that followed the death of Jesus and preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. "Cut it down, therefore," said the master; "why cumbereth it the ground?" This tree had not only the inconvenience of producing nothing, it also injured the vineyard by absorbing the nutritive juices of the earth and by intercepting the rays of the sun. Thus Judaism kept for itself the light of revelation, and, without itself profiting by it for the glory of God, it prevented its diffusion over the world. God seems to have taken His decision. He will suppress Judaism.

Happily for the fig-tree, it has an intercessor. It is the vine-dresser, who asks that the tree may have one last trial. "Lord," he says, "let it alone this year also, until

I dig about it, and dung it; and if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." How tender and how true in these words do we not feel the charity of Jesus, the one, real Mediator between God and man! In spite of all, He wishes to love this people that detests Him, and He sheds tears over that city that is going to put Him to death. The Father has despaired of the faithless nation; but He begs a respite and a one last endeavour. Let Him try for one year more [8] to cultivate this fruitless tree by His labour; He will enrich it with His words and with His works. If the results are more satisfactory, all will be well; if not, then divine justice must pursue its course; the tree shall be destroyed.

This, alas, was the lot of this prevaricating people. Separated from among the nations, it has ceased to be a nation. When God's mercy was exhausted, His justice began its work.

[8] The text does not say a whole year, but the remainder of the current year, which would be in conformity with the Gospel chronology adopted by many: ἄφες αὐτὴν καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔτος.

CHAPTER XI

A FIRST ENTHUSIASM NOT SUFFICIENT TO MAKE DISCIPLES

The Enthusiasm of the Multitudes—Jesus Explains What One Must Do to Become a Disciple—He Must Hate That Which He Has Held Most Dear—He Must Bear His Cross—The Tower to Be Built and the War to Be Waged—Salt Is Good—The Plots of the Pharisaical Faction to Draw Jesus Out of Peræa—The Master's Grave and Solemn Response. (St. Luke xiv, 25–35; xiii, 31–33.)

The brilliant descriptions of the Messianic Kingdom sketched by the prophets account for the lively enthusiasm stirred up in the masses by the announcement of its approach, and the eager desire of all, especially the honest country folk, to be enrolled among its citizens. The inhabitants of Peræa were almost as simple as those of Galilee; their faith was still alive, because the religious sects had troubled them but little with their dry discussions. Knowing that Jesus was going up to Jerusalem to proclaim Himself the Messiah, they hastened to His side, asking for a place among His disciples.[1] But it was necessary to check such ardour on the part of those who still dreamed of a temporal king, and to enlighten it in those who, while viewing the new Kingdom from the proper point

[1] *St. John* x, 42: καὶ ἐπίστευσαν πολλοὶ ἐκεῖ εἰς αὐτόν.

of view, were deceived as to the obstacles to be overcome in order to gain an entrance.

If a momentary desire of the heart were sufficient for salvation, it would be easy for man to make sure of eternity, and it could not be said that the gate of heaven is narrow and its road rough. There is, alas, a law of death, which we must observe if we would deserve to live. This law is the touchstone of the true disciple. Before proclaiming themselves proselytes and believing themselves to be already admitted to participate in the Messianic banquet, the people of Peræa must ask themselves if they are able to endure it. Enthusiasm counts for nothing; it brings them to the gate only, but not beyond the threshold.

It is in order to avoid deception and to dispel all misunderstanding that the Master, turning to the multitudes as they crowd around Him, says: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." This condition, however harsh it may be, is necessarily required. Whatever may be in danger of compromising, by its anti-Christian spirit, the sovereign love which we owe to God, the worship of His truth, and the observance of His law, must be hateful in our sight; we must break with it. If this danger arises from those beings who are most intimately bound to our life, even if it arises from ourselves, we must learn to make our decision resolutely, and part from our parents, our friends, our habits; we must learn to put aside our dearest affections and even our own nature. A true disciple can allow no obstacle to the perfect charity which he has vowed to his God. His hatred in this case proves his love. But this hatred does not affect those poor creatures to whom we are bound from the depths of our being, but only the spirit that animates them and that may be fatal to

us. This is so true that our duty is to prove to them that we love them, nevertheless, by our efforts to rid them of the spirit that makes us detest them.

How many will have the courage to break with everything that is not according to the Gospel, and thus stifle their own hearts, that they may the better follow the Master, especially when they know that this first sacrifice may soon be followed by another? For the disciples are liable to be summoned to immolate not only their hearts, but their very bodies. Moral martyrdom may be succeeded by physical. "And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Elsewhere we have seen the meaning of this expression, which was too unusual not to have a prophetic sense. Calvary will soon become its authentic and bloody explanation. But, however fearful the anguish may be, to be truly faithful, one must feel himself capable of sharing it. Besides, even without violent persecution, a man, from the very fact that he desires to be a Christian, will be always a martyr. If the wicked put the Cross upon his shoulder, he must accept and bear it; if they do not, he must seek it himself, and fasten himself to it with his own hands, in battling with his passions, tearing from his heart all that is not for God, bruising his rebellious body, if need be, in order to chastise and bring it into subjection. All this is severe and requires thought on the part of one who thinks to present himself for discipleship.

"For which of you," continues Jesus, "having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it? Lest after that he have laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Such should be the foresight of him who pur-

poses to embrace the Christian life. This life is likened to a tower, because by its moral beauty it rises above the plane of common life. To embrace it means to draw on one's self the eyes of the multitude from which he determines to separate publicly. The Christian ideal entrances man, and at first he is eager to attain it. But imagination and enthusiasm do not suffice for this moral achievement. There is required a solid, durable fund of generosity. Each day he will be called upon to make new sacrifices, to hate his own life, to practise difficult virtues. Will he have the courage to persevere? Before undertaking it, it is well to put this question to one's self in the silence of meditation. Nothing is more humiliating to the Church than premature conversions, because they are not durable. Great reports had been spread concerning them, and suddenly it is learned that they have been interrupted and that they amount to nothing. The world, with a wicked joy, proclaims that it has to-day recaptured him who, yesterday, had left it with such éclat. The imprudent neophyte had not seriously calculated his moral resources, and he halts powerless after the first effort of an untimely zeal. He has succeeded only in making the worldling laugh and good Christians feel sad.

"Or what king," says Jesus again, "about to go to make war against another king, doth not first sit down and think whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that with twenty thousand cometh against him? Or else while the other is yet afar off, sending an embassy, he desireth conditions of peace." [2] The Christian is a king, since to serve God is to reign. But he must not expect to have the crown without a struggle. He cannot even

[2] This last detail is one of the rhetorical embellishments of the parable to which no attention must be given, if we wish to avoid considerable embarrassment. Jesus cannot mean to say that man, finding himself in-

hope to keep it without being continually under arms. He must, therefore, see whether he has the strength to fight the enemy. If he has not, let him abstain from plotting to obtain the royalty. It were better never to be king than to be forced to abdicate in shameful defeat and to go and die in the dungeon of an exile. Does the man who desires to follow Jesus, feel enough heroism in his heart to stifle there all his passions, enough vital sap to give growth there to all the virtues? Can he undertake this dangerous war, build this lofty tower? Let him come to the Master; he shall be happy. If, an enthusiastic disciple the first day, he is to become only a renegade the next, let him go his way. His name would dishonour the valiant army of the Gospel. "So likewise," concludes Jesus, "every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be My disciple." Hard as this condition may seem, it is indispensable. To pretend to establish the new society with inert, selfish, cowardly elements, would be to effect nothing great, nothing strong, nothing lasting. "Salt is good," [3] says the Master. Its savour, penetrating the meat, preserves it, gives a relish to the taste, and makes it useful for mankind. Thus the spirit of mortification, of renouncement, of sacrifice, personified in the hard, austere life of true disciples, will spread over the world like a handful of sharp-tasting salt, will penetrate the mass and check corruption. "But if the salt shall lose its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" Nothing can replace it in mankind, who, without it, dwelling in the midst of sin, would be forever lost. The salt itself, after its decomposition, would come to a sad end. "It is neither

capable of coping with the demon, ought to make peace with him. Much less can we understand it to be a question here of making peace with God. The only thought with which the Master wishes us to be penetrated is that the chances of a war must be seriously weighed before it is undertaken.

[3] Pliny had said: "Nil sale et sole utilius." (*Hist. Nat.*, xxxi, 9.)

profitable for the land, nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

In these teachings there was something as unyielding as truth. Jesus, far from hiding the Cross, pitilessly portrayed it in its most terrifying aspect. Reminding the Apostles that, after having accepted it, they were no longer free to reject it, He declared to the neophytes that they must know its full weight before they take it up. This language, proud without being disdainful, conveyed the loftiest idea of the young Master and of His work. One appreciates especially that which is bought, and not that which is given. Jesus seemed to close the gate against proselytes rather than open it. These latter eagerly strove to gain an entrance, and the concourse of people was immense.

Once more the party of the Pharisees, perhaps in obedience to instructions from Jerusalem, was aroused against Him. As they deemed it imprudent to assume a hostile attitude toward Jesus, they had recourse to a ruse. Their orders must have been cunningly to induce Him to leave Peræa and return to the neighbourhood of the capital. There He would immediately come once more under the eye and hand of the Sanhedrim.

In all probability, Herod was, at that time, at Livias or at Machærus, that is, in the very country which Jesus was evangelising. The fact that he was near by was employed in an effort to intimidate the young Teacher and to induce Him to go suddenly into Judæa. With an air of mystery and pretending to be friendly, certain Pharisees came and said to Him: "Depart and get Thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill Thee." As a matter of fact, it would not be impossible for the Tetrarch to have been really disturbed by the religious agitation of which Peræa was the scene. But did he need any intermediaries to make known his dis-

pleasure to the new Prophet? Even if this displeasure were real, may we suppose that these sectarians had sufficient sympathy to wish to warn Jesus of it and to withdraw Him from danger? Certainly not. It was an evil motive alone that had inspired the Pharisees' conduct. With His penetrating eye, the Master measured all the malice of their false charity. In His reply, which He begs them to report to Herod, He begins by attacking the men themselves, thus showing that He was not duped by their hypocrisy. "Go," He says, "and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following,[4] because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." The fox is Herod, if he really gave them that mission, which they have just fulfilled; it is they themselves, if they planned it. In the latter case, it is useless for them to carry back this answer to the Tetrarch, who is not awaiting it; they must keep it for themselves, who have merited it. Besides, the jealous hate of all will soon be satisfied; the terrible catastrophe is rapidly approaching. To-day, to-morrow, and one day more; then all is ended. The divine plan must be fulfilled. The Victim will offer Himself. They shall then be in Jerusalem. It is enough that John the Baptist should have been slain outside of the Holy City. It were unbecoming once more to deprive the capital of Judaism of the privilege of witnessing the death of its prophets. This response was as cutting in its irony as it was admirable in its resignation.

Jesus left the Pharisees to ponder on it at their leisure, and continued to evangelise the multitudes that came to Him.

[4] By taking these three days literally, one would reduce to the meanest proportions all the grandeur and solemnity of the Master's declaration.

CHAPTER XII

THE MERCY OF GOD IN PARABLES

God Pities the Sinner, Because He Sees Him in Danger: the Parable of the Lost Sheep—He Is Sorry for His Errors, Because a Man Given to Sin Is One Just Man Less to Glorify Him: the Parable of the Lost Groat—He Loves Him, Because the Sinner Is Ever His Son: the Parable of the Prodigal Son—Final Blow Aimed at the Jealous Pharisees. (St. Luke xv, 1–32.)

It is worthy of remark, that while, on the one hand, Jesus held in check the unreflecting enthusiasm of the multitudes and seemed to repel the upright men of Judaism by saying: "Reflect, perhaps you are not equal to the sacrifice!" on the other hand, He attracted, by His touching kindness, those who were despised; He attracted toll-gatherers and public sinners, whom public opinion placed outside the law. The reason of this is, no doubt, that humility, the necessary accompaniment of true repentance, was easier for the latter than for the former. The man who is filled with shame for his sin is often nearer to justice than the proud man who parades his false sanctity.

Among these unfortunates, however degraded, many showed themselves deeply touched by the advances of this new charity thus manifested toward them. Hence they

gave themselves freely to the Master, opening their hearts to Him, and bringing to Him, with a faith that was unreserved, the most generous devotion. From this arose affectionate and even familiar relations between these sinners who felt themselves loved and the Teacher Who sought to rehabilitate and save them. He readily admitted them to a place among His disciples, or went Himself to sit at their table, which, in the Orient, is a sign of the most cordial union. In Peræa, as well as in Galilee, this gave great scandal to the Pharisees. They were incapable of comprehending how one can hate sin while loving the sinner, as if there were no difference between mercy and connivance. Narrow and ungenerous hearts, they judged that by showing one's self to be the friend of sinners, one became himself a sinner; as if it were not the privilege of the sun's ray to penetrate the mire without staining itself, and to remain pure while aiding the growth of flowers amid the offal. The Apostle is especially great when he feels the noble passion to make the bad good and to save what seemed to be lost. In this it is God Himself that he imitates or obeys.

For God is never indifferent in His attitude toward fallen man. The solicitude with which He surrounds him is touching. He *pities* him, because He sees that he is miserable; He *regrets* his loss, because, having given him a soul, it distresses Him to let it perish; He *loves* him, because, although disfigured by vice, man is still His work and His son. One day, when the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, as they saw the tax-gatherers and sinners mingling familiarly with the groups of disciples, Jesus, happy to find these poor outcasts by His side, not asking for miracles,[1] but listening to His words, took pains to develop these three ideas in a

[1] The text says: Ἦσαν ἐγγίζοντες . . . ἀκούειν αὐτοῦ.

series of parables, the last of which, that of the prodigal son, forms, perhaps, the most beautiful page of the Gospel.

"What man of you," He says, "that hath an hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it?" [2] None, indeed. How, then, demand that the Shepherd of the flock of Israel should do otherwise? Scripture, as we have seen, represented the Messiah as the official Shepherd of the people of God. Jesus' adversaries, those revered doctors of the Synagogue, were merely subordinate shepherds. However, as they were shepherds, the Master's question directly referred to them. The sheep is the image of the sinner who falls rather through ignorance, through lack of reflection, through allurement, than through malice. Like him, the sheep may wander, and, like him, again, it cannot save itself alone. Instinct fails to lead it back to the fold, just as, for the want of grace, the sinner is not strong enough to do penance. The sheep is unarmed for self-defence, and, separated from the flock, it is an easy prey for the enemy. Thus the sinner without help from on high is fatally exposed to an awful death. The first sentiment inspired by his fault and his abandonment is compassion. By this same sentiment, even more than by his personal interest, the shepherd is inspired to leave the ninety-nine sheep in the pasture where they are sheltered from all danger, and to hasten to the aid of his poor lost one. The flock here is the figure of Israel, faithful to the law of Moses, awaiting the Messiah-Redeemer. Jesus leaves it in this condition, comparatively satisfactory, to hurry after those of the sons of the promise who have strayed in forgetfulness of the ordinances of the law, obeying only the voice of their

[2] The desert, in Hebrew *midbar*, is the vague region where the flocks were led to pasture.

corrupted nature. He goes on until He finds them in the most dangerous places, on the edge of the abyss where wild beasts inhabit. Nothing tires His patience; and when He has found the lost sheep, continues the Master, He lays it lovingly on His shoulders. He must bear the sinners, as well as the sins of the world. It is evident that He has Himself experienced all those delightful sentiments which He so happily describes in the good shepherd: anxiety because the sheep is lost, courageous efforts to recover it, gentleness and tender care when he has found it again, the joy he feels in carrying the precious burden and to which he gives expression by inviting his friends to share in it.

Although it is not expressly stated, we may suppose that he brings it, not where the others are, but into his house, since it is there that he gives way to his joy. Are we to recognise in this last detail a particular intention, and is the shepherd's lodge a privileged place for the recovered sheep? Many have thought so. For Jesus does not return converted sinners, whom He bears upon His shoulders, to their place in Judaism properly so called; He installs them in the Christian Kingdom, which is His own house, and raises them to a state of life which the children of Abraham have not yet known. Thus is explained how there is more joy over a single sinner whom penance has enabled to unite himself to Jesus Christ in the new Church, than over ninety-nine just men who, content with their lot, hold themselves still bound up in the ceremonial laws of the Synagogue, and do not dream of presenting themselves at the threshold of the new society. It might be, however, that there was in this nothing more than the expression of a movement quite natural to the heart of man. For we experience joy and love for another in inverse ratio to the anxiety and pain he has caused us. The mother, watching her ailing child, seems to forget those who are in good health; and if the sick

one recovers, she feels in this happy restoration a greater joy than for the perfect health of all her other children.

However that may be, the shepherd invites his friends to share his joy, even as they had shared his anxiety. "Rejoice with me," he says to them, "because I have found my sheep that was lost."

This tender picture of the shepherd's contentment is the authentic expression of the joy of God Himself as He announces to the Church in heaven the good that accrues to the Church on earth. Nothing is exaggerated; it is drawn by Him Who knows the secrets of the bosom of the Father. "I say to you," Jesus adds, "that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Therefore, he who is scandalised because Jesus seeks to bring back sinners, is scandalised by God Himself, and that which saddens the Pharisees on earth rejoices the Angels in heaven.

Moreover, the inconsistency of Jesus' adversaries is equalled only by their malice. Another similitude will prove to them that they consider very wise, in ordinary life, that which they immoderately condemn in the relations of the spiritual life. Not only is there no shepherd who does not leave his flock in order to save a lost sheep, but, as the Master adds, "What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it?" Here is a second motive for the solicitude which God manifests for the sinner. Before, it was compassion that guided the shepherd. Now, it is self-interest that directs the woman. Has man any real value before God? Yes; created according to His likeness, he should, by a life in keeping with His idea, His law, and His love, augment His glory. A soul that strays is a coin wanting in the divine treasury. Therefore God seeks it

eagerly even among the offal and the refuse of this Jewish society, where public sinners and prostitutes are hidden. With indefatigable patience, He first brings light into the depths of these darkened consciences. Now, by a series of sad events, He rouses them; now, by the influence of a friendly word, He attracts them. At the same time, He breathes into them the powerful breath of His grace which frees them of all the stains that disfigure them. Finally as the result of this persistent work, He recovers that which was lost. What joy, then, and what triumph! Of this, the woman, transported with delight, who, as the Master says, "called together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost," is a simple and touching picture.

Like this woman, the Church, striving for nineteen centuries to fulfil the desire of God's mercy, has not interrupted for an instant her search after lost souls. She holds her light, which is the Gospel, in her hand, and its powerful word serves her to throw into confusion believers and unbelievers. Bravely attacking every vice, her untiring zeal cleanses, penetrates, brings the light of day into the most obscure corners of her house. Thus, she often succeeds in restoring to the divine treasury the soul that had strayed away. There is great joy on such occasions on earth and in heaven among the true children of God. Only the bad are scandalised by these endeavours, and are saddened by the success that crowns them, irritated, Jesus observes once more, by the very fact that gives pleasure to the angels and the saints.

Happily for these jealous people, God pursues His work of mercy none the less even in their behalf, and solicits with His grace even the ingrates who blame Him. The reason is because He loves the sinner, not simply as the shepherd loves his sheep, or as the poor woman her groat; He feels

for this wretched being an affection stronger, deeper, more imperious. He feels the inexhaustible tenderness of a father's love. Herein lies the whole secret of divine mercy. That it may be well understood, Jesus adds a third parable, the most beautiful and the most touching one He ever uttered. Let us pity him who, while reading it, feels no tear mounting to his eye, no good emotion stirred up in his heart. He is dead to love, and his hardness of heart is beyond hope.

"A certain man had two sons." This man is God, and the two sons are the just and the sinners, who constitute the entire human family. "And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me." It was thus that in the days of their great apostasy the sinful Gentiles had boldly broken away from the true God. Thus again parts from Him that class of the Jews who make common cause with the Pagans, publicans, people of sinful lives, and whoever tramples on God's law in order to follow unbridled the instincts of perverted nature. It is not yet time for him to receive his inheritance; and still, with resolute voice and in words that express all that he knows of the law,[3] but no filial sentiment of his heart, the son claims as a right and not as a favour a third of his father's fortune. According to Moses,[4] the remainder was the portion of the eldest. Nothing else than an immoderate desire of liberty could have inspired this younger son to this woful conduct. The upright life of his family weighs upon him. The world allures him. He longs to be his own master. Thus the libertine declares that the atmosphere of religion and virtue, in which he had passed his earliest years, now stifles him. The tempter

[3] See Wetstein on this passage. He shows very clearly, according to profane authors, all that was technical in this demand of the young man.
[4] *Deut.* xxi, 7; Michaelis, *Mos. R.*, § 79.

has murmured in his ear that it is time he were his own god,[5] and this youth in his imprudence hopes to make the fortune which he is going to receive, and the freedom which it will assure him, a pedestal for his woful divinity. In this first act of pride, which is the sin of sins, is found, in germ, all the woes of the future. What a difference between the attitude of the just man and that of the sinner! The one, with affectionate and filial submission of soul, says to the Father: "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread." And on the day following he desires the pleasure of asking it again as on the day before; he is happy in resigning himself ever to His kind will. The other, detesting the sweet servitude of the family and scorning its tender joys, already in revolt against the paternal authority, cries out: "Give me what is mine, and let me go!"

And the father "divided unto them his substance." Since the son's heart was no longer content at the domestic fireside, there was nothing better to do than to let him depart. So God, Who created man free, permits him to withdraw when he feels himself no longer happy in His service. Since the holy independence which he enjoyed in the fulfilment of duty does not suffice for him, let him go and try if licentiousness be better. It is, no doubt, with regret that the father sees this well-beloved son hastening away to his ruin, but it would not be to his honour to detain him by violence; we may even say that it is not in his power, for the emancipated son is become his own master. Thus God leaves the sinner to the desires of his own heart, as the Apostle says;[6] the Holy Spirit ceases to strive against the violent demand of concupiscence: only the bitter experience of sin can lead back this foolish one later on.

"And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country." As the in-

[5] *Gen.* iii, 5. [6] *Rom.* i, 24, 26, 28.

grate had desired not only to be his own master, but to be master far from his father, he hastens, that he may depart without delay, to convert his capital into money; he proceeds more speedily, perhaps, than is necessary to safeguard his interests. This, however, matters little. The fever of the passions has seized him; his folly has begun, he no longer stops to calculate. Without even bidding farewell to his sorrowful father, he takes everything and goes his way. Elementary prudence might have counselled him to make some provision for an evil day. But no, passion must have all in order to sate its longings. Thus, possessed of a rich nature, a noble intelligence, a powerful energy, man sometimes determines to abandon God and His law, and to seek that bustling land where the world offers him many pleasures. This land is at the antipodes of the paternal hearth. The name of the Father is never spoken there. It is there that the Gentiles live, the publicans, the public sinners, those unfortunates whom thirst for enjoyment has dragged on.

And the prodigal "there wasted his substance, living riotously." He had, then, gathered all his things together with all that care only the more quickly to scatter them. In the name of freedom, all that he possessed was cast into the gulf. The light of his intelligence became dim, his will had energy henceforth only for evil, and in his soul, in the place of natural integrity, of justice, of human virtues, were assembled all the most horrible vices. But little is required to despoil man of gifts of mind and heart, and to deprive him, not only of the flower of youth that crowns his brow, but also of every element of personal worth. The wind let loose upon the earth without God to control it, promptly hurls to the ground the fruits and even the leaves of the tree, and then begins to wither the tree itself.

"And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine

in that country, and he began to be in want."[7] Liberty to enjoy has therefore its limits. Health, fortune, youth, fail at length; disgust puts an end to pleasure, remorse turns it to poison. The thing itself sometimes refuses at last the enjoyment that we seek in it, and leaves us panting with the desires it will not satisfy. And, as a climax of misfortune, unforeseen accidents occur in the domestic life; death, betrayal, dishonour, sudden ruin give the last blow to the heart of the sinner and cruelly break it. To have sacrificed all for pleasure, and to be doomed to most hopeless suffering, is fearful. Yet the world, a veritable land of famine, has scarcely any other lot in reserve for those whom it allures. Without truth and without love, it can satisfy no one, and even they who share in its feasts inspire pity in him who is truly wise, because, even at these resplendent tables, they are and shall always be famished.[8]

In the meantime, the habits which they have contracted, the passions which they have aroused, become so many imperative needs. When these are famished, man is capable of anything. The prodigal had now but one thing left, his liberty, for the sake of which he had abandoned his father's roof, and had made the acquaintance of every excess of vice. By a bitter mockery of fortune, which is a providential chastisement inflicted upon libertines, behold, all his desires for independence succeed only in making him the most miserable of slaves. For, that he may not die of hunger, he is going to sell his liberty.

"And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that

[7] The expression which Jesus employs (ὑστερεῖσθαι) signifies destitution, the condition of a man reduced to extreme poverty. (Cf. *II Cor.* xi, 9; *Hebr.* xi, 37.)

[8] St. Ambrose tells the reason of this: "Etenim qui recedit a verbo Dei esurit, quia non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo Dei; qui recedit a fonte, sitit; qui recedit a thesauro, eget; qui recedit a sapientia, hebetatur; qui recedit a virtute, dissolvitur." (*In Lucam* vii.)

country." The demons are the proprietors, the citizens of this land of sin, which is the world. Their obstinate malice has made this their condition forever. Faithless man has come there freely, and may in like manner depart. He appears in that land merely as a passer-by. Therefore he experiences hunger there. Those who are native to the place seem not to feel it, for this famine is their normal state. That God should be absent from these reprobate demons is the eternal order. That He should be absent from man on his journey here below, is a disorder in time. This torment of hunger felt by the prodigal was still a sign of life; in the sinner this hunger is, at it were, a last element of moral resurrection. The demons no longer feel it; or, at least, if they do, it is under the form of a frightful despair, and not as a good desire, for the demons are irrevocably separated from their God and deprived of eternal happiness. What could the wretched youth expect from this new master whom he chose? Doubtless bread that he might live; but if he obtained only bread, he must have acknowledged that he had sold at a very low price his honour as a son of the house and his liberty. But that bread, which the just man receives every day, stretching forth his filial hand to the Father of heaven, the prodigal shall not obtain at the close of his humiliating labour, by asking it of his earthly master. "And he sent him into his farm to feed swine." It would have been difficult to have assigned him a meaner and more degrading task. Herodotus [9] tells that the swineherds were the only class of men against whom the Egyptians shut the doors of their temples. The Jews treated them even more harshly.[10] Thus does the world do with the imprudent whom it has seduced by its promises of independence. When they have sacrificed

[9] *Hist.*, ii, 47.

[10] See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, *in Matt.* viii, 40.

everything, property, honour, a happy and virtuous life, it cruelly gives them to understand that they are nothing more than slaves, and, putting into their hands the derisive sceptre of the swineherd, it obliges them to go and guide their vile passions over its lands, to glean there a livelihood as insufficient as it is disgraceful.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks [11] the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." There was not enough, therefore, in the rations of bread, which, in this time of famine, were distributed to the servant. The swine were less unfortunate than their keeper; and as he saw them eat their fill, he began to long for their feed as it lay in the trough.

This is an ugly but true picture of the sinner, who, having reached the very lowest level of moral degradation, and even there feeling the extreme hunger of his spiritual and immortal soul, begins to regret that he was born so great. He would wish to be like the beast, a machine of sensations, which the coarse satisfactions of the flesh can satisfy, and which finds in the mire the object of its ambitions and the substance of its desires. But that shall not be given him any more than the coarse vegetables were to the prodigal. He shall remain either eternally famished without God, or a son filled with good things in his Father's house. No other alternative is possible.

Alas! what a course this youthful ingrate has run, and in what a short time! What an awful difference between that peaceful, contented, honourable life at the paternal fireside, and the shameful bondage in which he is wasting

[11] The word κεράτιον does not signify, as the translation of it in the Vulgate (*siliquæ*) would seem to indicate, the husks or pods of any fruit whatever. It was the fruit of the tree which the Greeks called κερατωνία, or the fig-tree of Egypt (cf. Theophrastus, *H. P.*, i, 17), and which we call the carob-tree (cf. Rosenmüller, *A. u. N. Morgenland*, vol. v, p. 198). There is no tree more common than this even in the land beyond the Jordan where Jesus spoke this parable.

away! Artists have, with masterly strokes, represented him, alone, seated beneath a mournful sky in the midst of a landscape devastated by the hurricane. His long hair, foul from neglect, falls unkempt upon his emaciated shoulders; his dull eye contemplates a recent dream or a painful recollection; the filthy herd follows at his feet. His tongue is mute, but one feels that a long-drawn and painful sigh is heaved from his panting chest. A tear rolls down his cheeks burnt with passion. In the ages that have passed, how many sinners, letting their gaze fall upon this sad picture, have said: "I am such a man!"

At the time when Jesus appeared, the whole pagan world should have recognised itself in this touching parable. By departing from the worship of the true God, it had lost all, and, after having journeyed through the long stages of the most shameful decadence without being either consoled or rehabilitated by philosophy, it made a trial of the infamous vices and hideous cruelties of imperial Rome to see if it could assuage the hunger which all the gold of earth and all the triumphs of pride had left terrible and inexorable in the entrails of her children.

Fortunately, above the sinner, as above straying mankind, there is a Father. The Father's heart still loves, when ours has ceased to love Him; His strength still endures, when we, imprudent and weak, have fallen; His mercy awaits, solicits, and consoles the returning culprit. This heavenly Father fears not to multiply the thorns in the way of him who has strayed away and to make his estrangement sufficiently intolerable to fill him with disgust.[12] Oh, the wonderful and loving severity of God's mercy that gives us such lessons! When that mercy speaks a harsh and terrible language to a foolish man, it is because in his obstinacy he

[12] St. Augustine, *in Ps.* cxxxviii, 3, 4.

shuts his ears and is incapable of hearing any other. Extreme misery with all its sufferings is the last stroke of grace. The sinner either dies of it once and for all, or saves himself by retreat. This is the critical moment, the eventful hour in the development of the moral drama.

"And the prodigal returned to himself." Man is lost by giving himself up to culpable allurements; he is saved by gathering himself together in order to resume possession of his soul. The day on which he silences the boisterous voice of external things, he hears more distinctly the inmost murmurings of his conscience, and then begins his resurrection.

"He said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger!" Nothing could be more natural than this comparison. When a man at last gets rid of his horrible illusion, he beholds himself full of disorder, folly, and woe. This is the more hateful in that he can see above his head the heavenly bodies following, in their great evolutions, the word of command received from God, without ever deviating from their course; round about him, all nature in its unconscious but perpetual regularity, ever glorifying the Creator, and at his feet, the very beasts finding their relative happiness in obeying, as a divine law, the voice of instinct that directs them. All, except him, is, therefore, in order, and everything is happy in the various spheres of creation, wherein, however, nothing is so great as he, since these creatures without liberty are not God's sons, but only blind servants and slaves. He alone, in this universe full of harmony and of beauty, is a shadow on the picture, a living disorder, a rebel. And, as a consequence of his crime, he alone is unhappy.

The contrast was crushing; the sentiment to which it gave birth was decisive. He who, in profound misery, thus

evoked the memories of his father's house, suddenly paused at a thought that must have made him tremble. It seemed strange, but it was true. This overwhelming but salutary light came from his heart; he could not reject it. The old days and the present, his family and the swine, most perfect comfort and most frightful distress, were so many antitheses which, rising up all at once in his soul, inspired him with lively disgust for the present and bitter regret for the past. Thus repentance begins. Let but a movement of confident love succeed this, and it will be complete, and, with a strong resolution, it will revive his virtue. "I will arise," [13] said the young man, as he overcame his last fears inspired by shame, "and will go to my father." He dares then, even yet, to utter the name of him whom he has dishonoured. It must have been only with tears and sobs. His heart has told him that he must hope, just the same, in the virtue of that blessed name, and in the fund of tenderness which it implies in him who bears it. Therefore he will resolutely make it the first word and the chief argument of his discourse. Rhetoric could not have supplied him with any more beautiful exordium. "I will say to him," pursued the young man, as he felt confidence growing in his heart: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Heaven counts the bitter tears that every wicked son draws from the heart of his father, and will avenge them soon or late. "I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." There is nothing lacking in this beautiful repentance, neither frankness as to the line of conduct planned, nor firmness in his filial confidence, nor directness in his unexcused confession. The sinner is so humiliated by the thought of his faithlessness that he does not dream of the possibility of

[13] The word *ἀναστάς*, repeated two verses farther on, indicates well the moral effort necessary in a true conversion.

a complete restoration. To gain the last place, when by right he had occupied the first, seems to him to be the greatest favour that he can desire. There is something astonishing in the moral greatness which sincere humility can impart in a moment even to the most degraded and most wretched souls.

Without an instant's delay in the fulfilment of his brave resolution: "Rising up, he came to his father." True repentance does not hesitate to act, it moves as soon as it has spoken.

There is a touching detail in this that from the day of that sad separation the father's heart had never ceased to hope for his son's return. In his long experience of life, he had counted the hours necessary for the young ingrate to be led by want to better sentiments. For a long time, many times a day, he had scanned the horizon longingly, and in the evening he went back to his dwelling in sadness, for he had not seen his poor lost son returning.[14] Thus our Father in heaven, with untiring and ever-watchful love, waits for the prodigals of earth to arise at last and return to Him. No sooner does He perceive a good impulse in our hearts, than His tenderness breaks its bonds, and, setting aside all severity, He goes so far as to forget all justice. We have scarcely time to take one step toward Him, before He has taken ten toward us, and our lips have not begun to stammer forth a word of regret, before He has already overwhelmed us with His merciful caresses.

"And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and, running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him." What a touching scene! The sight of his son covered with shame, disfigured and disgraced in his misery, stirs up in the father's heart,

[14] The text suggests all these details: *ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος, εἶδεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ, κ. τ. λ.*

as it were, a renewal of affection. No one else could recognise in this sad ruin the young man who had departed so beautiful and so proud of his liberty; he has the courage to acknowledge beneath those sordid tatters his blood, his likeness, his heir. From this moment nothing withholds him, neither the sentiment of his outraged dignity, nor the weight of his years and the respect for his white hairs; he runs, he hurries on precipitately. What if, unfortunately, this son should hesitate at the last moment, and turn back! In his arms he wishes to bind him; with a kiss he wishes to tell him of his love more tender now since he had lost him; on his breast he wishes to receive him and to smother, before it is even uttered, his cry of repentance. For the son, indeed, scarcely begins his avowal: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son," when the father has closed his lips. He seems unable to endure such language. Assuredly this confession is an act of justice, but this act becomes too painful for him by reason of the memories it recalls and the grief it expresses. Besides, what need has the father of hearing the mouth speak when he feels so deeply in his own heart the heart-beats of his son? O God! how great is Thy love, if this be its history, and how wicked the sinner who still seeks to avoid Thy fatherly embrace, or to despair of pardon because he mistrusts Thy mercy! "Bring forth quickly," said the father to the servants who had hastened to witness his joy, "the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf,[15] and kill it." This reinstatement is as complete as it is sudden. The father will not let a trace remain of the guilty folly of his son. The richest costume shall replace his rags;

[15] This was the calf that was fatted for family feasts. (*I Kings* xxviii, 24.)

sandals shall protect his bleeding feet; and the ring, with its seal, the insignia of a free man,[16] shall tell to all that the well-beloved son has regained his rights as a lord in his father's house. So does God grant to the repentant sinner the justice that purifies him, the grace that guards his steps, the holy liberty that honours the children of the Kingdom. With joyous song, the banquet of love and thanksgiving is prepared, and the father guides to his place with all his friends his now wise and repentant son.

"Let us eat and make merry," he says, "because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found." [17] We feel that the father's heart is overflowing with liveliest joy, and that he wishes every one to share it. For what greater happiness could come to him! His son has escaped from death, and he himself has regained the beloved one whom he had lost. The rejoicings and the banquet began at once.

Here in reality ends the sublime parable in its most general application and most lofty signification. The second picture which the Master is about to sketch is only a lesson addressed to the egotistical Pharisees, and for us has not the same importance. With the most complete details in a sort of epilogue, Jesus sets before the eye those whom His mercy has just moved to murmur. Nothing could be more strongly drawn or more lively than this portrait of the Pharisee in his jealousy and pride.

"Now," added Jesus, "his elder son was in the field." Thus, while the publicans are rejoicing and resign themselves to the mercy of God, the Pharisees, without enthu-

[16] *Gen.* xli, 42; *St. James* ii, 2; comp. *Herod.* ii, 38. This ring, δακτύλιον, bore a name-seal and was used in signatures. The prodigal had sold his long since.

[17] This parable sums up, therefore, the two preceding: the son had fallen a prey to the wolf like the sheep, and has at last been saved; and he was lost, like the groat, and after much anxiety the father has recovered him.

siasm, sad, and selfish, are labouring beneath the heavy yoke of the law. "And when he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing." Of a gloomy disposition and narrow mind, he was annoyed. Rather than enter in all simplicity and see for himself, "he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant." Simple souls advance straight to their goal. Narrow, fastidious natures think that by surrounding themselves with manifold precautions, by assuming an air of severity, by conducting themselves with an affected reserve, they acquire true piety. Everything offends them, and it seems to them that they can love God only in sadness and in lamentation. When a man experiences so much repugnance in participating in legitimate family rejoicings, it is a sign ordinarily that he cherishes jealous thoughts, and, in this way, his morose and harsh attitude is explained. The servant related the facts as he knew them: "Thy brother," he said, "is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf,[18] because he hath received him safe." A good son would have rejoiced that his brother had been found and his father filled with delight. "He was angry, and would not go in." In like manner, the souls of the Pharisees, whose hearts had long since been withered by their detestable pride, are indignant at seeing sinners, publicans, Gentiles return to the Heavenly Father's hearth, as if they had not once occupied their place as sons beneath the paternal roof. They refuse to enter with the multitude, and prefer to renounce salvation, rather than share therein by the side of prodigals returning from so far, and so mercifully welcomed by God.

"His father, therefore, coming out, began to entreat him." The old man's love is inexhaustible; here once more

[18] The servant repeats here what the father himself had said a moment before; but what a difference between the language of the one and that of the other! The one had spoken as a father; the other as a servant.

he makes the first advance toward this other son who is indeed unworthy of him. And Jesus, Who is speaking to the Pharisees, is truly the Father of heaven hastening toward the discontented son with as much charity as He had approached the prodigal son. It is a striking contrast! The sinner had been admirable in his humility and respect before his father; the just man is remarkable by his pride, his irreverence, his obstinacy. "Behold, for so many years," he said spitefully, "do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends." Thus speaks the presumptuous satisfaction of the Pharisee. Shamelessly he declares that he has counted the years which he spent with his Father and that he has found them long —the wretched man has served and has not loved—and confidently proclaims that he has been sinless;[19] and with a soul too small to comprehend that the best of all rewards is the paternal love, he complains that he has never received any recompense at the close of his labours. How his jealousy is pleased to set forth the favours of which his brother is the object! No detail escapes his malicious emphasis. He desires the contrast to be a striking one, so that the father's partiality may be evident. "But," he adds, "as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou has killed for him the fatted calf!" What bitterness in these words! He does not say, *my brother*, but, *thy son*; can it be that he no longer wishes to belong to the family himself? He designates his brother with a word of scorn: *this*, he says, *is come*, as if it were question of a stranger who appeared for the first time at the domestic fireside. At the same time he forgets nothing that will make the case complete against his brother: *he has*

[19] We shall find the perfect development of this sentiment in the parable in which Jesus draws a parallel between the Pharisee and the publican.

devoured all his substance, and that *with harlots*, while he, the irreproachable, just man, scrupulously respected his father's will. Thus he believes that, in proportion as he crushes the prodigal, he will advance his own interests; but, behind this jealous pride, we perceive that this wretched brother has done good without having any love for it, and avoided evil without hating it.

However, such detestable sentiments exhaust the father's goodness no more than the follies of the prodigal had exhausted his mercy. "Son," [20] he said to him with perfect kindness, "thou art always with me, and all I have is thine; but it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again, he was lost and is found." With what condescension he deigns to reply to the wicked recriminations of this eldest son! After having endeavoured to arouse in him all the affection that he might be capable of, by calling him his dear child, he tells him delicately that, living in his house, under his eye, surrounded with his love, he should have been filled with joy every day. Besides, he has been always master there, welcome to whatever he desired. His father had never refused anything. If he has not had even a kid, it was, doubtless, because he did not desire it. It does not, perhaps, agree with his sombre, melancholy disposition to feast with his friends. The religion of the Pharisees, consisting wholly of fear, had, indeed, as it were, a taint of misanthropy. These sectaries, who served God as slaves serve their master, would not admit that one could piously rejoice in the Lord. They might, however, like the great and beautiful souls of Judaism, have tasted each day, under Jehovah's eye, the sweet consolations of divine love. Grace was at their disposal; if they did not enjoy it, it was because they did not ask it. Why, then, complain, when

[20] The word *τέκνον* which he uses is more affectionate than *υἱός*.

brethren returning to their father's house avail themselves of it? The Pharisees have that to do that is better than recrimination; let them sit down at the family feast and share therein. The Father is wealthy enough; His liberality will never compromise the rights of any. But, even were it otherwise, should not the joy of having regained a *brother*—the aged man had uttered this word intentionally to remind the elder son that he would have wished to hear it from his lips—suppress all thought of material interests? The family, which had been diminished, is to-day re-established in its entirety; the father sees himself living again in his two sons; the brother will find beside him the other half of himself. Does all this, then, count for nothing?

Like this elder son, who believed his younger brother forever lost, Judaism had flattered itself that it alone would receive the entire fulfilment of the divine promises. The coming of the Messianic Kingdom was to be for Judaism alone. As if the Gentiles, for having devoured their heritage and dishonoured the name of the Heavenly Father, were not also children who could be found again. Great, then, is the surprise and violent the anger of these egotists, as they behold the pagan world suddenly return to the paternal hearth, in the tents of Sem, as the prophet of old [21] had said, and Jesus opening His arms to them with most indulgent kindness. If these pious Pharisees had the love of God, they would have thrilled with joy, as they embraced their lost brethren, who were returning in multitudes to Jehovah to follow His law and to work for His glory. But these hypocrites loved only themselves; and in their egotism, they forgot heaven's interests, while, in their pride, they ignored the bonds of brotherhood that united them to the other peoples of the earth. This was the source of all the evil.

[1] *Gen.* ix, 27.

Jesus did not finish the parable. It was not necessary to tell whether the elder son entered the banquet-hall or if he was obstinate in his repugnance. It was left for the Pharisees who listened to discover the event for themselves. The Master had just made advances toward them, had just given them certain explanations. The banquet-hall was open. It was their duty to see if, at the risk of sitting side by side with publicans and sinners, they should finally decide to take their place at table.

CHAPTER XIII

WORKS OF CHARITY AND THE FUTURE LIFE

Works of Charity the Way to Heaven—Publicans, Pharisees, Sadducees, All Must Remember This—The Steward's Fortunate Breach of Trust—We Must Become Friends with the Treasures That God Confides to Us—The Pharisees' Detestable Attitude—Another Parable: Lazarus and the Sinful Rich Man—The Judgments of the Future Life—Since Moses and the Prophets Have Spoken, the Testimony of One Risen from the Dead Were Useless. (St. Luke xvi, 1–31.)

Such, therefore, is the ineffable mercy of God in favour of the sinner, that, after having awaited, sought, and found him, He has in reserve for him a most generous pardon. Are we, however, to believe that man has only to hold himself passive until grace shall come to him, and that he has nothing more to do when he has received it? Assuredly not.

Works of charity and especially alms given to the poor prepare our return to God, or perpetuate it once it is effected. Practical benevolence is, so to speak, the powerful magnet that attracts divine mercy, until it assumes the character of expiatory reparation. The publicans, for the

most part, have become rich by their criminal profession. If they wish to merit forgiveness, and to have their past forgotten, they must begin by distributing in charity their ill-gotten goods. Zacheus, before long, will show how the Master's counsel is to be understood. As easy as salvation is to the man who loves his fellows, just so is it impossible to him who does not practise charity. The Pharisees, with all their conceit of righteousness, can never enter the Kingdom of God if they are not generous to the poor. Hardness of heart, as well as pride, fatally shuts the gates of heaven.

To make this clearer to those who surround Him, Jesus at once propounds two parables, the first of which especially has been considered difficult to interpret;[1] and it is so, in reality, if we forget that the Master did not hesitate to employ at times the prudence of the wicked as an example to the improvident children of the Kingdom.

Besides, His audience was a very mixed one, and it must not be forgotten, in order fully to understand all the details, that the Master's teaching was directed to all, Pharisees and Sadducees, but that first He spoke to the publicans who had become or desired to become His disciples.

"There was a certain rich man," said Jesus, "who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods." This rich man is God, the great owner of the world; He has His stewards in the person of the rich of earth who, delegated to exploit the divine domain in the interests of the great majority, must labour for the Master and to make sure His glory. How often, neglecting their

[1] It is well known that this is commonly called the *crux of interpreters*. For, some have said that the rich man represents the Roman authority, others the demon, and many wealth personified in Mammon. The various explanations will be found in Meyer, *Comment. in Luc.* xvi, 1; but none of them is admissible. Evidently it is God that is represented; for He alone *gives good fortune and withdraws it, gives death and life.*

part in life, do they dissipate in senseless prodigality, in the satisfaction of their passions, the wealth intended for others! In this way, they seem to baffle divine Providence, and, therefore, the Angels, witnesses of all their malversations, cite them before the court of the Sovereign Master.

"And he called him and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer." The steward is summoned to produce his records, not to justify himself, for his guilt is evident, but to bring matters to a close. It is a dismissal in good and proper form. The master desires to make an inventory of his wasted property only to place it, such as it may be, in more faithful hands. The great voice [2] of God summoning His steward to a revision of his accounts, is that which death sounds in our ears, when, already marking us with her fatal finger, she makes ready to seize us. Then conscience awakens, enlightened, severe, pitiless, and lets the worldling see the foolish use he has made of goods which were intended for the poor, and of which he had been appointed, not proprietor, but administrator.

Regrets soon follow this lightning-stroke, and the improvident man, in the midst of his extravagance, says to himself: "What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed." Mortification which would expiate his faults, and humiliation which would redeem him, appear equally unacceptable to this ungenerous and still feeble soul. "I know what I will do," he adds, as if suddenly enlightened, "that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses."

[2] The text has *φωνήσας*, not *καλέσας*, to show that God speaks as Master.

So long as he has not made up his report, he retains the free disposition of the goods over which he has charge. He can, for one last time, abuse his power, not to appropriate the capital—there is, perhaps, none left in the treasury—but to make friends for himself by fraudulently remitting in part the obligations of those whom he finds inscribed among the debtors. Therefore, desirous of binding them to him by well-planned favours, "calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? An hundred barrels of oil.[3] Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty." He must have done the same for all the others, thus transferring them, according to the amount of their obligations, from the position of his master's debtors to that of debtors toward himself. Moreover, he proceeded in a clever way, not cancelling the debt, but counting it up anew. "And the lord commended the unjust steward for as much as he had done wisely." Not that he approved the injustice of a procedure of which he was the victim, but he could not but praise its cleverness. "For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

It is precisely this tact of the children of the world that Jesus wishes to place side by side with the improvidence

[3] The terms *βάτος* and *κόρος* employed by the Evangelist are of Hebrew origin. The *bath* was used in measuring liquids. According to Josephus (*Antiq.*, viii, 2, 9), it held one Attic measure, 38.88 litres. The *cor*, used especially in measuring grain, held (*Antiq.*, xv, 9, 2) ten Attic *medimni*, or ten times 51.79 litres, which is hardly probable, since a measure that would hold 517.90 litres would have been impracticable; with reason therefore the *cor* or *coros* has been reduced to thirty times the *modius* of 2.24 litres, that is, to 67.20 litres. So that the faithless steward made a reduction of 19 hectolitres 44 litres of oil to the first, and 13 hectolitres 44 litres, or, following Josephus' figures, 103 hectolitres 58 litres, of grain to the other.

of the children of light, and He proves that the cleverness of the former is far greater in the use of the things of time than the prudence of the latter concerning the affairs of eternity. The former make use, sometimes even unjustly, of the goods of earth in order to secure for the day of their downfall friends who will help them in return for obligations contracted; the latter are not wise enough even piously to employ the treasures that God gives them, in order to provide for themselves protectors, advocates, intercessors, on the great day of eternity.

"And I say to you," cried the Master, "make unto you friends of the Mammon of iniquity,[4] that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." Since then, how many sinners, meditating on these words, have found in their fulfilment pardon for their crimes and consolation in their last moments! They took God's goods —all that we have is the Creator's—and, distributing them generously as if they were the owners, they have repaid for the extravagance of former days in catering to their evil passions. God is pleased with this policy. He praises it as wise and prudent. Its efficacy is certain; for the intercession of the poor, who have received charity under a form more or less delicate, has a special influence and bears a decisive weight in God's judgments. Later on, the Master will return to this subject. The publicans no doubt under-

[4] Ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας. The word *Mammon* employed here, which is more correctly spelled with a single "m," as in Chaldaic and Syriac, is employed in *Genesis* (xliii, 23) to designate the money hidden in the sacks of the sons of Jacob, and is spelled *Mathmon*, signifies not the god of money, but the money itself, and this is called the money of iniquity, either because man in his search after it is ordinarily guilty of avarice or because he abuses it in the gratification of his passions. Some suppose that the Master qualifies it thus because the steward uses it as if it were his own, while in reality it belongs to God alone. This usurpation constitutes an injustice, and the money is thus money of iniquity. But does not this explanation give to Jesus' words, so natural in their simplicity, a subtle shrewdness that is scarcely becoming?

stand it, and prepare to make it their rule of life, henceforth transformed under the action of grace.[5]

As for the Pharisees, lovers of money, their souls devoid of charity, they sneered[6] in ridicule and seemed to cloak themselves disdainfully with a perfection which they paraded in the eyes of all present.

"You are they," said Jesus to them—and the severity of His words checked their derision—"who justify yourselves before man, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is high to men is an abomination before God." It is easy for these proud men to gain the admiration of the poor people at their feet, but they cannot deceive the God above their heads; and at the moment of death, neither their pretentious sanctity, nor their apparent rigorism, nor their wealth without almsgiving, will be able to supply the place of true virtue and find favour before God. In eternity, another shall be judge of their works, and different will His judgment be. Woe to him who shall not have thought to provide friends for that critical moment.

By a second parable, which seemed to be an allusion to some contemporary fact, Jesus proceeds to make this clearer.

"There was a certain rich man,"[7] He says, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously

[5] We omit here the precept concerning fidelity to little things. This passage, if we take it as being in its place after the parable of the steward, gives rise to difficulties of explanation, which in our opinion are insurmountable. On the other hand, it comes quite naturally after the parable of the servants who are rewarded, according to their fidelity in making their talents bear fruit. (*St. Luke* xix, 11–28, and *St. Matt.* xxv.)

[6] The verb ἐξεμυκτήριζον, which occurs again in *St. Luke* xxiii, 35, expressing the sarcastic attitude of Jesus' enemies at the foot of the cross, signifies to ridicule by turning up the nose.

[7] Jesus gives him no name, and he merited none. The world knows the name of the rich, but never that of the poor. The Saviour, on the contrary, knows only the name of the unfortunate. The name of Lazarus, besides, was the only one that He read in the book of life, the other was not there.

every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,[8] who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring[9] to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." The contrast is perfect between the most complete comfort and the most profound misery. Of these two men, the one, a Pharisee[10] or a Sadducee,[11] dwelt in a palace, and the other in the street. The former every day reclines on rich divans, in the midst of chosen society, before a sumptuous table; the other lies upon the pavement, has dogs for comforters, and nothing to eat. The first is clad in precious stuffs, the second is covered with unsightly sores. This contrast is prolonged for many years, perhaps, nothing occurring to render it less scandalous. Lazarus, the poor man of God, continues unwearied and in silence to long for a few crumbs, and the rich man pursues his series of feasts, never deigning to have even the spoiled remains passed out to him. Wretched man, he forgets that God had intrusted him with wealth for the nourishment of the poor and not of his passions. His foolish prodigality will inevitably reach an end, and

[8] The name Lazarus is only a corruption of the Hebrew *Eleazar* or, as abbreviated by the Rabbis, *Leazar*. It signifies "God helps him." One might call it a professional name; it fitted a beggar perfectly. Nearly all the modern languages employ it in designating those institutions established for charitable purposes under any form.

[9] The word ἐπιθυμῶν signifies here an unsatisfied desire. This also should give us to understand that Lazarus had not even the crumbs for which he longed; such is the parallel intended in the parable, between Lazarus deprived of the crumbs from the table and the rich man failing to obtain the drop of water.

[10] We see the great personages of this sect taking delight in exhibiting their luxury and their wealth at great feasts. (*St. Luke* xiv, 12; xi, 39; xx, 40–47.)

[11] It is the Pharisees that are brought into view by verse 14, but all the details of the parable seemed to be addressed similarly and in certain special points to the Sadducees. The hypothesis that this wicked rich man was Herod-Antipas, or Caiaphas, because of the five brothers mentioned is entirely gratuitous, and loses sight of the fact that such personalities were not to the Saviour's taste.

the senseless man will not have even thought of making for himself, for the day of trial, at least one friend in this Lazarus who begged from him.

At length the hour of justice struck. The pauper and the rich man had come to the close of their careers.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died" first. God owed him this favour since his life was, humanly speaking, the more miserable. Nothing is said of his burial; it may be that his body was thrown into the sewer. In any case, his death was as unnoticed as his life had been.

"And the rich man also died," and his funeral was magnificent.[12] They who had profited by his wealth, friends, servants, relatives, surrounded him for the last time with a useless pomp. They laid him in the tomb, and the worms began to devour him, as they had devoured Lazarus.

But the soul of neither of them was dead; they had just entered into eternal life. A new order of things therefore commenced for them; and if, in time, the contrast between their lives had been violent, it was to be awful, but in an opposite way, in eternity.

Lazarus, after his death, "was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom." He passes therefore of a sudden from the most abject misery to the most perfect bliss, from the company of dogs to that of Angels, from the chill darkness of a gateway to the joyous banquet of heaven. He takes his seat by the side of Abraham, father of believers, who presides at the eternal feast; on his bosom even he reclines his head. He therefore holds the place of honour. It was not simply his poverty that gained him this reward; it was his patient and humble poverty. He has neither cursed Providence nor conspired against society. Following the

[12] This is signified by the word ἐτάφη, intentionally placed at the end of the phrase to mark the solemnity of the burial.

signification of his name, he placed his hope in God, and devoutly kissed the hand that submitted him to the test.

The rich man, on the other hand, passes from opulence to absolute destitution, from pleasure to truceless woe, from life to death in hell. Need the cause be told? Jesus, in the parable, does not take the trouble to explain it. He thought, no doubt, that Lazarus, dying of hunger and helpless at the very door of the rich man, was an argument sufficiently conclusive against him who had had the woful courage to turn a deaf ear to his groans. It is not, therefore, his wealth properly so called that excludes him from the banquet of Abraham, the first rich man of God's people; it is his egotistic sensuality, it is his hardness of heart, it is the imprudence with which, after having proven a faithless steward seeking the pleasure of his own passions, he failed to make friends against an evil day. He falls into hell, as into an abyss, although he never expected it. The sepulchre of earth, however beautiful, has let its prey pass on.

In Hades[13] "lifting up his eyes when he was in torments," he seemed to call for assistance. His surprise is so sad, that he cannot believe that it will continue. The

[13] The term *Hades*, employed here and in only two other passages in the Gospel (*St. Matt.* xi, 23; *St. Luke* x, 15, where Capharnaum is to be thrust down into the abyss, and *St. Matt.* xvi, 18, where it is said that the gates or the powers of evil shall not prevail against the Church), is the Greek name corresponding to the Hebrew *Scheol*. According to its etymology, ἅιδης, from ἀ privative and ἰδεῖν, "to see," it signifies the invisible realm into which men enter after death. In order to make His parable, Jesus conformed to the theological ideas current among His hearers. These ideas are those which, developing gradually from the time of the Captivity, were found set down in the latest deutero-canonical or even extra-canonical productions of Jewish literature. On this question see the remarkable article by M. Touzard, *Revue Biblique*, April, 1898.

After the second book of *Machabees* and that of *Wisdom*, the *Apocalypse of Henoch* and the *Secrets of Henoch*, no less than the *Psalter of Solomon*, are, with greater fidelity than the texts of the *Talmud* compiled after the Gospel, witnesses of the tradition current at the time of Jesus Christ. What is read in these books is certainly what was taught in the synagogues. In

fire that encompasses him, the pains that seize upon him, the sudden fever that burns him, all this cannot really be for him, who until then was so luxuriously lodged, so delicately fed, so finely clad. In any case, it is intolerable. Oh, for a kind hand, come whence it may, a friend, a saviour! And, as he looked, above his head "he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." To him that must have been a strange sight. They were seated at a banquet, and he lay in torments. It was exactly the contrary to what he had until then seen on earth. Lazarus was no longer outside dying of hunger, but within at table; the rich man was no longer within doors provided with everything, but without, burning, devoured with thirst. Across the intervening space he chances a despairing appeal. "Father Abraham," he cried with all his strength, for he was at a great distance from him to whom he spoke, "have mercy on me!" He recommends himself in his character as a son of Abraham, as the Pharisees do; but has he, by his life, done honour to the sonship of which he now avails himself?

Was Abraham a man without charity for the wretched, wholly devoted to himself and his pleasures? Can he recognise as children those who have had none of his broad and generous religion? In truth, the unfortunate man only half dares expect it, and the modest prayer he utters proves that he fears to abuse a benevolence to which he has but little right.

"Send Lazarus," he pleaded, "that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." So then he would now accept as benefactor him whom on earth he would not have as debtor. The harsh

reality one single point in the whole parable ought to be retained as the true Gospel teaching, namely, that the justice of God awaits men after death. The details of the scene are adapted to the hearers, and do not create any serious objection against Christian dogma.

experience of a woe that is only beginning makes him see too late that men ought to help each other mutually in the varying conditions of life. With a certain amount of shamelessness he means to benefit by this at once. No doubt the memory of the crumbs of bread that Lazarus begged but did not receive, moves him to ask only the drop of water put upon his tongue by the finger of him whom he let die of hunger.

"Son," responds Abraham, not denying the first title which the condemned man had to an eternity less woful, and making him perceive it, "son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Above every other consideration comes that of justice. The rich man made the chief or even the sole object of his life consist in the enjoyment of the goods of earth. He has received them, or rather he has avariciously appropriated them,[14] and has used them with criminal sensuality, seeing nothing above or below him. Since they were his goods, as the Father of Believers says, he therefore renounced all others whatsoever. Why, then, be surprised if, having lost them, together with life, he possesses not those others for which he had never sought and whose reality he did not even admit? Lazarus has had only misfortunes,[15] but while enduring them he did not look upon them as the final term of his existence. Hence, having hoped for something more after them, he has found it, and must enjoy it for all eternity. Each of them has made his life beyond the grave what he willed to make it. The one, hoping in nothing, shall experience the most awful destitu-

[14] This is signified by the expression ἀπέλαβες, which Abraham uses.

[15] This time Abraham does not say *his evil things* as he said *thy good things* (the Greek text has τὰ ἀγαθά σου), because Lazarus did not regard misfortune as his final destiny. He passed through the trials as the ship ploughs the waves, in order to reach the port.

tion; the other, hoping for all, shall have the most complete felicity. Death has sealed the desires of both and fixed them forever.

In vain will the rich man look for an amelioration of his intolerable sufferings; it shall not be granted him. God's justice is inexorable. Even if Abraham and Lazarus, moved to compassion, should wish to aid him, they could not.

"Between us and you," adds the great patriarch, "there is fixed a great chaos; so that they who would pass from thence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither." A pitiless decree forever separates the good from the wicked. How awe-inspiring this view of the mysteries of the future life! It is Jesus Who speaks and it is His own thought that He tells us. Exaggeration can have no place on His lips, for exaggeration is not the truth. What matters it if He employs imagery to reveal to us the awful secrets of an unknown world? These figures certainly represent a reality, and this is a subject worthy of our meditation. To look for clearer and more authentic testimony than His is to look for the impossible. Jesus hints as much to His hearers, as He continues the parable, which seemed to be ended.

In the Master's teaching the practical follows closely on the speculative. He never neglects to make a direct and personal application of the most general theories.

"Then, father, I beseech thee," says the condemned soul, "that thou wouldst send him to my father's house for I have five brethren. That he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments." This good impulse of charity might seem strange in a reprobate; but we must not forget that we are in the domain of fiction, and that Jesus can freely have recourse to any details suited to transmit His thought to His hearers. Moreover,

this desire of the damned soul, if seriously analysed, is in reality inspired by undeniable egotism. For, if by his scandalous scepticism this wicked man perverted his brothers, he holds, even in the other life, the responsibility for their future disorders and their final impenitence; so that all his woes will be intensified in turn by all the evil that they do on earth. It is this increase of moral and physical torments that he wishes to avoid, hence he formulates his request. "They have Moses and the Prophets," responds Abraham, "let them hear them." Lazarus, the quondam beggar, despised by all, could not be to them a weightier authority than the great law-giver of the Jews, and the other servants of God. "No, father Abraham," again cries out the unfortunate man, "but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance." One does penance, not for having had wealth, but for having badly used it. This last word suggests, in fact, that the crime of the damned was, not that he had been a rich man, but that he had been wicked as such.[16]

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets," Abraham again makes answer, and thus he ends the dialogue, "neither will they believe if one rise from the dead." The words of the latter would be upheld by one miracle, whereas those of Moses and the prophets are sustained by miracles without number. This, therefore, in the supernatural order, is asking less than what they already have. As a matter of fact, it cannot be admitted that there are none to preach to these five brothers and all other sceptics who follow their example. It is the will to be converted that is wanting. They know where their duty lies, but they will not fulfil it.

The apparition of a dead man would not make them any stronger against passions which they do not desire to resist. The condemnation of selfishness, of sensuality, of indiffer-

[16] *Deut.* xv, 7, 8, and elsewhere; *Isa.* lviii, 7, and other passages.

ence to the needs of the poor is found in the Holy Books under every form. God threatens the powerful of the earth that He will rise up Himself to defend the rights of the needy who are abandoned,[17] and He counsels each one to redeem his sin by almsgiving.[18] The wicked alone have not heard Him; they have closed their ears to the voice of conscience only to open them to every call of passion.

Good deeds have ever paved the way to heaven.

[17] *Ps.* xi, 6. [18] *Dan.* iv, 24.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HUMILITY THAT MARKS THE TRUE SERVANTS OF GOD

PRIDE, EVEN BEFORE GOD, THE RADICAL VICE OF PHARISAISM—THE APOSTLES FURNISH JESUS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO CONDEMN IT—"INCREASE OUR FAITH"—IN STRICT JUSTICE, GOD IS NEVER MAN'S DEBTOR—THIS THEORY IS THE TRUE BASIS OF HUMILITY—THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN. (St. Luke xvii, 5–10; xviii, 9–14.)

THE great evil of the Pharisees lay not wholly in the haughty severity which they displayed toward sinners, nor in the avarice which deafened their ears to the groans of the poor; there was something still more detestable than this; it was the pride that puffed them up when they thought they had scrupulously fulfilled the law. In the end they came to believe that God was their debtor, and in their pride they stood before Him to demand, as an acquired right, their reward or rather their hire. Nothing certainly could be less reasonable or more odious than this foolish pretension. It put to flight every true sentiment of religion, and nothing more was needed to poison the best intentions and to compromise the truest virtues.

With implacable persistency, Jesus made war on this sad illusion. Thus, one day, as they were returning per-

haps from some successful mission, the Apostles, yielding to that natural sentiment of the human heart which, after a good work, so easily forgets the help of grace, and beholds only its own merit, sought Him and said to Him: "Increase our faith." This meant, on their lips: "Make us more powerful wonder-workers." Did they mean to claim this as the price of their labours? Possibly. As a matter of fact, their desire had a certain merit, since it amounted to a wish for an increase of power for the general good. But the Master's eye discovered a trace of that Pharisaical tendency which He so thoroughly detested. As the tone of their request revealed a rather pronounced sentiment of personal satisfaction, He began by humiliating them: "If you had faith like to a grain of mustard-seed," He said to them, "you might say to this mulberry-tree,[1] Be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the sea, and it would obey you." They are as yet but very grudging believers, since even the smallest of grains is out of proportion as a symbol of their faith. Wrongly, then, do they with such pretensions beg the Master to increase that which does not exist even as a germ in their hearts. Besides, they should not be ignorant of this, that, however small their faith might be, if only it were real, it would be capable of accomplishing works which they had in view. For, by faith, the religious man is so associated with the life of God that he seems to share in His omnipotence. Strong in the authority of his Father over all creatures, the man of faith can command the elements and the spirits of evil, when the glory

[1] The tree called *συκάμινος*, or the fig-tree of Egypt, is a grafting of the fig-tree and the mulberry-tree, as its Greek name indicates. It has the leaves and proportions of the mulberry-tree and the fruit of the fig-tree. (Dioscorides, i, 182; Diodorus, i, 34; Pliny, *H. N.*, xiii, 14.) Under the name *siqemim*, the plural of *siqoumot*, it is mentioned in *III Kings* x, 27; *Isa.* ix, 10, and *Amos* vii, 14.

of the Father requires it. The mulberry-tree, which Jesus points out with His finger, is probably a figure of the Kingdom of God, primitively established in the privileged land of Israel. The weakest faith in the Apostles' soul were sufficient to uproot it with a word, with a sign, and to plant it in the midst of the swollen sea of the Gentiles.

They are, then, mistaken first of all in desiring the development of a faith which they have not even in a rudimentary state; but they are culpable in claiming it as a reward that is due them.

"But which of you having a servant," says Jesus, "ploughing or feeding cattle, will say to him, when he is come from the field: Go immediately sit down to meat; and will not rather say to him: Make ready my supper, and gird thyself, and serve me whilst I eat and drink, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant for doing the things which he commanded him? I think not. So you also, when ye shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants." What a difference in the appreciation of the works of man, according as one regards them from the viewpoint of right, or from that of mercy, as one examines them with the eye of God's justice or with that of His love! Justice says to the labourer, as he returns from his work: I owe thee nothing, what you have done has been paid for in advance; and justice is right. Love says to the faithful servant: Sit down at table, and I will serve thee; and love, too, is right. We must never confound the sacred rights of the one and the astounding condescension of the other. God may love us with most extraordinary tenderness, and yet He can never be our debtor from the fact that we have done our duty. We are His work, His property, we owe Him all, and He Himself owes us not even another moment of life. He is, indeed, then,

foolish who pretends to set up his works as valuable in the eyes of this Sovereign Master. It behooves us to leave it to His fatherly heart to discern our efforts to please Him and the sincerity of our desire to honour Him. Let us beware of appealing to His justice. The decision which we should provoke would not be to our advantage.

In this doctrine, the depth of which is admirable, Jesus established the real basis of humility. It is only when man has a thorough sense of his own nothingness before God, that he begins to be really something. The Father's mercy exalts us only when we have abased ourselves before the supreme authority of the Master.

A parable, found only in St. Luke and placed by him at a later date, but which has no connection with what precedes or follows it,[2] finds its natural place here. It demonstrates the Master's thought concerning those who, confident of their own merit, esteem themselves just and despise others.

"Two men," said Jesus, "went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican." At the very outset the comparison is striking. Here the two extremes of Jewish society are together before God, the one with his exemplary justice, his scrupulous regularity, his legal sanctity; the other with his sins, his despised life, his public unworthiness. They come to pray. If either of the two is to excel in doing so with that profound sentiment of personal unworthiness which renders prayer eloquent, it will, no doubt, be the first. He is familiar with the science of prayer, since he passes his life in the study and fulfilment of the law. The second has lived, up to this moment, in disorder, in injustice, in impiety; he knows not how to speak to God, accustomed as he is to converse only with sinners. And yet it is precisely the opposite

[2] *St. Luke* xviii, 9.

that is going to take place. The reason is that prayer finds its inspiration not in the head, but in the heart; not in proud self-sufficiency, but in salutary humility; not in the cold austerity of a passionless life, but in generous outbursts of repentance and of love.

Here, then, are both in the Temple. The more important personage speaks first. He has begun by separating from the multitude, and, having drawn near to the Sanctuary, he stands there drawn up at full height.[3] One would say that he came there proudly to display himself before God and man. Since he is, at last, in sight, he can commence his prayer. "He prayed thus with himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican." In his insolent pride, instead of praying, he gives thanks. He needs nothing. None other is as just as he. He is an exception in the world, and this prodigy of the human species is fully conscious of his incomparable sanctity. All other men are only unfortunate wretches; he has seen the irregularities of their public lives, he knows even their secret sins and the sentiments of their hearts. In his own life, in his own heart, he has seen nothing, alas, and that is his great misfortune. He judges the rest of mankind in order to absolve himself. His proud presumption even points out with the finger the victims whom he condemns; and his gaze directed, not with humility and love toward the altar, but with pride and scorn at the poor publican who is praying near the door of the Temple, turns back again to himself with senseless satisfaction.

[3] The Jews prayed sometimes standing (*III Kings* viii, 22; *II Paral.* vi, 12; *St. Matt.* vi, 5; *St. Mark* xi, 25), sometimes on their knees (*Dan.* vi, 10; *I Paral.* vi, 13; *Acts* ix, 40; xx, 36; xxi, 5), according to the sentiment that animated them. Christians have preserved this custom. Catholics, however, remain most of the time on their knees, following the perpetual tradition of the Church and the most common practice of the first Christians.

To attain the very height of impudence he needs only to prove that God is his debtor, and that personally he has nothing for which to be thankful, but that rather he should be thanked. He is about to do so. "I fast twice in the week," he says; "I give tithes of all that I possess." A good Jew was not obliged to do all this. Moses had prescribed only one day of fast in the year, namely, that of the great Expiation.[4] Some pious personages had introduced others, but the Pharisee went farther than all, and observed two each week. The Israelite was obliged, according to the law,[5] to give only a tenth of the gross receipts of his property. Grains, fruits, small vegetables were not mentioned. The Pharisee, however, makes no exception, and, with unparalleled scrupulousness, gives, as every one can see, the tithe of all that he receives. Thus his vanity rests complacently upon the spectacle of his heroic perfection. He has told what he is, what he does, what he gives. His prayer is ended. His thanksgiving is completed. God has been named in it, but has no part therein, for it is his own personal praise that this proud man has just sounded. He will retire having gained what he asked, that is, nothing more than what he has.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but struck his breast" in prayer. What a contrast! The one has approached God with presumptuous familiarity, the other withdraws from Him in pious trembling; the former has separated himself from the common crowd in order to exhibit his justice, the latter knows not how to hide himself that he may conceal his misery. The Pharisee lifts up his head, his voice, his hands perhaps, like a statue in ecstasy for the admiration of all; the publican dares not even to raise

[4] *Levit.* xvi, 26; *Numb.* xxix, 7.
[5] *Numb.* xviii, 21; *Deut.* xiv, 22; *Levit.* xxvii, 30.

his eyes, so penetrated is he with his own unworthiness and with the majesty of the God before Whom he stands. When he pronounces His awful name, it is with mingled respect and fear. He desires that this cry shall mount up from his heart and not from his lips. But his heart seems to him to be full of corruption, and, strengthening himself in holy anger, he strikes it with his hand as if to bruise and chastise it for its weaknesses. "O God," he said, "be merciful to me a sinner." There are but three words in this prayer, but such words! God, the sinner, and the mercy that unites these two extremes. All else is useless. The man who speaks thus has found the key of salvation. Humility has inspired him with the true prayer that calls for mercy, and this prayer has moved God's heart.

"I say to you," the Master concludes with solemn authority that sounds like the echo of heaven's judgment upon these two men, "this man went down into his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Thus humility supplants vice with virtue, whereas pride turns virtue itself into vice. God is greatness itself. When man exalts himself, God avoids him; when he humbles himself, God rejoins him. O mystery of eternal wisdom, whose ultimate reason is, doubtless, that God wishes alone to be all in all!

CHAPTER XV

JESUS GOES TO BETHANY TO RAISE LAZARUS TO LIFE AGAIN

The Message from Bethany—The Master's Response—Two Days' Delay—The Disciples' Hesitation to Go to Judea—The Arrival at Bethany and the Dialogue with Martha—Mary Joins Her Sister—Jesus' Emotion—"Where Have You Laid Him?"—Jesus Weeps Before the Tomb—The Motives of His Prayer to the Father—"Lazarus, Come Forth!"—The Effect of the Miracle on Those Present. (St. John xi, 1–46.)[1]

While the ministry of Jesus continued thus in Peræa, a messenger came with bad news from Bethany. Lazarus had fallen sick there, and seriously enough to move his sisters to have recourse to the omnipotence of their friend

[1] This event, which is one of the most important in the Gospel history, since it provokes the Sanhedrim to extreme measures against Jesus, has been passed over by the Synoptics in complete silence. They tell of the repast at Bethany without the slightest allusion to this event which was directly connected with it. The triumphal entrance into Jerusalem was itself partly a consequence of the resurrection of Lazarus. How then shall we explain that they who relate the one incident, say nothing of the other? Such silence is as surprising as that of St. John concerning the institution of the Eucharist. No hypothesis, yet suggested, gives the solution of the enigma, which very likely lies wholly in the fragmentary character of the Synoptics. It is through a concurrence of fortuitous and unknown circumstances that the resurrection of Lazarus had no place in the Synoptic list. St. Matthew, however, while relating only one resurrection, says that Jesus raised *the dead* to life again (xi, 5).

Jesus. They knew He was on the other side of the Jordan, and seemed even to keep themselves informed of His apostolic journeyings. Since there might be at that moment a real danger in summoning the Master back to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem—for the irritation of the Jews was at its height—Martha and Mary had endeavoured to word their message with the most prudent care, while with the greatest delicacy putting in the affectionate word which was to draw forth the response. A woman's heart generally excels in letting its wish be divined without positively asking it. "Lord, behold," the messenger had said, "he whom Thou lovest is sick."

The reason that may move Jesus to come is set forth at once: Lazarus is His friend, and he is in danger. However, as the sisters do not desire to expose the Master's life even to save their brother, the messenger will simply announce the fact, without adding any more explicit request. Jesus shall see the motives which He has for coming or for not coming. They leave it to His wisdom and to His good friendship.

On learning this news, Our Lord merely said, before everybody: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it." The messenger of the two sisters returned with this reply. It must have seemed all the more disconcerting, since it reached Bethany when Lazarus was already dead, which appeared singularly to compromise the Messiah's omniscience. However, on closer consideration, Jesus' words are seen to contain an allusion to a miracle foreseen in His behalf and even promised. Perhaps Our Lord here employed an equivocal phrase simply to subject to a profitable test souls who were dear to Him, and who, He knew, were strong in the faith. In reality, the true sense of His words was not that Lazarus would escape death, but that

his death would not be definitive. How, indeed, would God's glory have been augmented, if Lazarus' health had had to be restored by natural means and without the more direct intervention of Jesus? The solemnity with which He speaks of His glory prevents us from believing that He meant one of those cures which He was achieving every day by virtue of His miraculous power. He referred to something more prodigious.

But, the Evangelist tells us with great simplicity, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet He did not start at once. Careless as to whether He should seem either indifferent or powerless, He delayed two days longer. Many have thought that some important work, already begun, and which it would be unwise to leave incomplete, had necessitated this delay. But we must seek its motives in a loftier inspiration. According to the divine plan, Lazarus was to afford the Son of Man an exceptional opportunity for the manifestation of His power. The mere healing of a sick man, or the reviving of a body still warm would be nothing more than the repetition of one of the prodigies so often achieved without any decisive effect on those who witnessed them. There is need of something absolutely unheard of and peremptory. Let them mourn for four days at Bethany, God shall be thereby only the more glorified.

At the end of forty-eight hours, therefore, Jesus said to His disciples: "Let us go into Judea again." The word Judea, uttered intentionally, made them shudder. Had He said simply Bethany, it would have frightened them less. "Rabbi," they said immediately, "the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" Jesus answered: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but if he walk in the night,

he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." Taken in their natural sense, these words might mean that there was no danger in making this journey. After a twelve hours' journey they would arrive in Bethany. They had no reason to fear that the enemy would attack their small party during the day. By nightfall they would be sheltered in a strong place, where friends would protect them against any attack. It was in this sense, no doubt, that the Apostles understood the Master's thought. But Jesus wished them to understand something quite different. From the beginning, the time of His mission on earth appeared to Him as a day of labour which His Father, like a beneficent sun, should light with His protecting rays until the enemy's hour should come and with it the invasion of darkness. It was in this sense that He said: "I labour while the day endureth." And He knows that the day is not yet near its end, for His mission is as yet unfulfilled. They can, therefore, return to Judea without fear. God, Who is intent on the fulfilment of His work, will watch over His workmen.

For one moment Jesus allows them to reflect on these words which should have reassured them. Then, seeing them still hesitating and worried, He said to them: "Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." In like manner had He spoken of the daughter of Jairus: "She is not dead, but sleepeth," as if death were only a momentary cessation of life in sleep. With these words He gives them to understand that if the Apostles find it too difficult to follow Him, He will go alone. However, they could not well forget that Lazarus was the friend of all of them. "Lord," the disciples reply, "if he sleep he shall do well." Thus do they employ all the resources of their minds in setting forth reasons to dissuade the Master from a journey that is disagreeable to them.

They obstinately refuse to believe that Lazarus is sleeping the sleep of eternity, and they suppose that the Master had despatched a refreshing sleep across space to the sick man, that He already sees him sleeping, and that therefore his recovery is certain. It is useless then for them to go and expose themselves to death in order to save one who is out of danger. Weary of their objections, Jesus tells them plainly: "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there that ye may believe." Their faith, as we have said before, was still quite weak. Jesus seems to say that it had not really begun. It is to be hoped that the miracle they are about to witness will cause it to flourish unfailingly. It is for this reason that the Master congratulates Himself that He was not at Bethany when Lazarus fell sick. He could not have refused to heal him for His friends, and His disciples would not have seen the astounding prodigy of His resurrection. "But let us go to him!" exclaims Jesus, thus leading on the little group who were deeply moved at this sad news. Whereupon Thomas says to his colleagues: "Let us also go, that we may die with him!" We see from these words that the Apostles seriously believed in the danger of this journey. They expected to lose their lives in its accomplishment. It was strange that, even at this epoch, the Apostles' attachment to the Master rested more on affection than on faith. They do not wish to leave Him because they love Him, and they fear to follow Him because they do not trust the encouraging words which He has just spoken to them.

On arriving at Bethany, they learned that Lazarus had been buried four days.[2] A large crowd of relatives and

[2] Lazarus had died probably on the very day on which the message was sent to Jesus. As we do not know where in Peræa Jesus happened to be at that time, we cannot tell precisely the length of time it took for the news to reach Him, nor how long it took Him to reach Bethany; but it is evident that with the forty-eight hours' delay in Peræa and the time spent on the

friends had assembled to share in the mourning of the two sisters.[3] They had come mostly from Jerusalem, hardly three kilometres distant. Among the Jews, it was the custom to bury the corpse the very day of its death and before sunset, but the mourning ordinarily lasted for a week. This was the case here, for the Gospel gives us to understand that everything was done, in this devout household of Bethany, according to the conventional usages of the upper class.[4]

Like a particularly watchful mistress of the house—such is the character in which we know her—Martha is the first to know that Jesus is come. Without taking time to tell her sister, whose nature inclined her to shut herself up in a more silent and emotionless grief, she runs to meet the Master. Her appearance betrays the impression that dominates her. Affliction forgets the precautions of language which friendship ordinarily observes toward a superior, and through our tears we see only the friend. In a tone of tender reproach Martha exclaims: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" Then with the discretion of a woman of refinement, and with the faith of a believer, she adds: "But now, also, I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." She believed in the possibility of bringing Lazarus back to life, but she dared not express in words so extreme a desire. This confidence, suddenly inspired, perhaps, by some words of the disciples concerning Jesus' intentions, and justified,

journey we can easily count the four or five days, complete or only begun, mentioned in *St. John* xi, 17.

[3] As no man is mentioned, either father or brother-in-law of Lazarus, but only the two women, we conclude that they were the only immediate relatives of the dead.

[4] The two sisters (xi, 19) are represented as sitting in solemn grief in the midst of the people of the household: *πρὸς τὰς περὶ Μάρθαν.* The servants shared in the mourning and in the fasts of their mistresses. (*Esther* iv, 16.)

besides, by what she knows of the Master's power over death, does her especial honour. Yet we cannot deny that there is a certain imperfection in her manner of expressing it. Jesus needs not to ask His Father to restore life. He will prove that His own power is, indeed, sufficient. "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Underneath this note of apparent discouragement and by its profound grief, Martha betrays her design of forcing Jesus to explain His response. He does not hesitate to do so: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," He says with significant solemnity. No need of waiting until the end of the world; it is here and on the lips of Him Who speaks. The Son of Man, Who is to give life again to the world in the future, can indeed restore to life one dead man in the present. But to merit His powerful intervention, one must believe that He is really the Life, in the broadest and highest sense of the word. Martha has spoken to Him of praying to the Father. The Word, Who has life in Him, the Word, by Whom all things have been made and subsist, needs not to intercede; He has only to act. "He that believeth in Me," He adds, "although he be dead, shall live, and every one that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever." It is of the spiritual life and of the eternal life, the immediate fruits of a sincere faith in the Saviour, that He speaks here; but in a special sense. The Master probably means that, since He is Life in its highest expression, there can be no real death for those who are intimately united to Him by faith. The passing from a Christian life in time to a happy life in eternity can hardly be called death. Death implies entrance into darkness, and, for the faithful, this is an entrance into perfect light. In this sense we have said elsewhere, with the Master, the true believers are immortal. However, we may conclude, too, that God in

certain circumstances gives to the truly faithful the power of commanding death itself, by depriving it of its victims.

"Believest thou this?" asks the Master. This is the first condition required for the performance of the miracle. Martha has perceived the lesson, and at once corrects, in a new profession of faith, the error she had allowed herself to utter a moment ago: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou are Christ the Son of the Living God, Who art come into this world." Of a certainty, the testimony called for and given is splendid for its clearness and its courage. If she asked Jesus to pray to the Father it was not that she took Him for a mere prophet; she has long looked upon Him as the Son, and not the servant, of God. She knows that He has come down from heaven to assume our human nature, to become the Man-God, the Christ, foretold by the prophets and awaited of Israel. This is her creed. If she has not simply repeated the definition which Jesus gives of Himself, it is because she means to say even more, and especially to express her thought in terms which she understands better, because she has long meditated on them.

Satisfied with her response and with the favourable dispositions which she perceives in the Master, Martha begins to hope for her brother. She hastily returns to the house, with the decision of one looking for instant help. The influence which her sister may have over the Master's heart is well known to her. She judges it time to employ it. Besides, Jesus seems Himself to have called for Mary.[5] Martha, therefore, takes her sister aside: "The Master is [6] come," she tells her, "and calleth for thee." Jesus had not been desirous of presenting Himself in too promiscuous a crowd when exacting from the two sisters the act

[5] This, at least, is what Martha tells her sister.

[6] It would seem as if Jesus had no other name than Master or Lord for this devout household, where He was really the Master of all hearts.

of faith on which the resurrection of their brother depended. The categorical reply of these courageous believers would have excited too many protestations, and the incredulity of some would have been a hateful shadow beside the bright faith of the others. It was perhaps outside the village that the Saviour had halted, not far from the place where the family had its burial cave. On hearing the words: "The Master is come," Mary rises in a transport of joy, leaves the assembly, and, swift as the flight of her heart, she hastens to His side. The mourners imagining that, in the surrender of her inconsolable grief, she is about to go to the tomb to utter her last lamentation, all follow to weep with her and to comfort her in her sorrow. Thus, without suspecting it, witnesses came in crowds to behold with their own eyes and to touch with their own hands the miracle which Jesus was about to work.

To hurry to the spot where the Master was waiting, to penetrate the group of disciples, and to throw herself at His feet,[7] was but the work of a moment for Mary. There in tears she repeated the words which she must have frequently exchanged with her sister: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here,[8] my brother had not died." These were exactly Martha's words, but with this sole difference that Mary is content to insinuate by her suppliant attitude the prayer which her sister had added to her tender reproach. She knows well that in her eyes the Master will read the desires of her heart. The very silence she observes after her first word of regret contains something particularly touching. Martha, the more positive, spoke like a woman of mind; Mary, the more sentimental, has spoken like a

[7] We have said that in the Master's presence this devoted friend could find no other posture.

[8] In the phrase *οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανέν μου ὁ ἀδελφός*, the particular position of the word *μου*, "*my*," shows that Mary relied intentionally on this word as a sign that part of herself as it were had perished.

woman of heart. The Jews who had followed her wept with her. This spectacle did not fail to move Jesus, and the Evangelist says that He "groaned in spirit, and troubled Himself." What was this groaning,[9] which is repeated at the moment when the traitor is denounced at the Last Supper, and which breaks forth in its fulness at the approach of the final catastrophe in the agony at Gethsemane? Its cause must be sought in the two contradictory sentiments that occupy Jesus' soul: on the one hand the eager desire to do the work demanded of His omnipotence, and on the other the full consciousness of the fatal consequences that this work will entail for Him. To raise Lazarus from the grave is to sign His own death-warrant. Such a miracle at the very gates of Jerusalem must inevitably excite the most implacable anger, and many of these same Jews whom He now beholds sympathising with His friends will to-morrow join with the Sanhedrim in crying out that for this very prodigy He deserves to die. This clear vision of evil ready to triumph on account of that very favour He is besought to do, causes a holy shudder mingled with indignation deep in the soul of Jesus. But His decision is quickly made. He will accomplish the miracle.

"Where have you laid him?" He asks firmly. Not that the place of burial was really unknown to Him. He Who, although far from Bethany, had, by His divine prescience, beheld the death of Lazarus, knew without a doubt in

[9] Some have thought that Jesus was angry at His own sensitiveness; there is no reason for thinking so; for He will soon abandon Himself to it with touching simplicity. Others suppose that the attitude of the crowd displeased Him; but it would be difficult to say why, since they wept with the two sisters. Is He angry at an unseen enemy, at death, whose power He was going to humble; at sin, at Satan, the source of death? Many say so. But, relying on analogous passages of the Gospel, wherein Jesus' soul experiences an emotion comparable to this, we arrive at the explanation which we give, and which is the most satisfactory.

which tomb he had been placed. Jesus' question, like that which God asked Adam amid the trees of the earthly paradise: "Where art thou?" in no way implies ignorance in Him Who asks it. It may be that its purpose was, as in the conversation with the woman of Samaria, or with the disciples of Emmaus, to remind us that in Jesus there were two natures, and that in Him we must never dissociate the man who questions from God Who restores to life. "Lord, come and see," was the answer; and they took their way toward the sepulchre.

There is no sight more poignant than the stone beneath which lie buried those whom we have loved. The heart breaks before this sad and inexorable reality. At the foot of the funeral monument the mourning of the two sisters was redoubled. The multitude wept with them. This sight moved Jesus anew, and from His divine eyes tears were seen to flow.[10] The astonishment of the Jews was great. One commonly imagines that superior men are above such tenderness, as if a delicate susceptibility were not one of the most beautiful sides of the human soul. St. John has thought otherwise in his Gospel, and the more he demonstrates Jesus as God, the more does it seem that he also seeks to make us admire Him as man. How consoling it is for us to see our kind Saviour sharing like a faithful friend in the grief of those He loves! Not cold like marble, nor wholly beyond us like a pure spirit, He has a heart of flesh, He loves, He mourns, He weeps, and associates Himself in all the actions of virtuous humanity that He may render them divine. To the two women of Bethany belongs the honour of having, through sympathy, caused the shedding of such holy tears. He had not wept

[10] The Evangelist does not say of Him as of the others, ἔκλαυσεν, but ἐδάκρυσεν, to signify that He wept without groaning. His emotion was dignified and calm.

in Jairus' house nor at the sight of the funeral procession at Naim. Before other dead, His heart had felt only a divine compassion; before the dead body of a friend, it experiences all the tenderness of human affection.

As they noticed the tears on His cheeks, many, moved by His tenderness, exclaimed: "Behold how He loved him!" Others less friendly said one to another: "Could not He, that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die?" For to restore the sight is more difficult than to arrest the course of an ordinary disease. If Jesus has not prevented Lazarus from dying, it is either through inability or through indifference. If the first be true, then why pose as a thaumaturgus? If the second, why weep for him whom He has allowed to die?

These malevolent observations betray to the Master that His enemies are not far off. Through their hypocritical mourning, they are watching Him, then, with malice. For the second time His soul was stirred with a holy trembling. The danger is plainly imminent; but He fears not. "Take away the stone!" He says authoritatively. "The tomb was a cave," says the Evangelist, "and a stone was laid over it." [11] At this moment, Martha, who by her prayers has moved Him to this bold undertaking, seems to hesitate. She almost wishes to stop here. "Lord," she says, "by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days" dead. The resurrection in this case will have to be a second creation, for life has long since left the body, and decomposition has set in. The odour of the poorly embalmed remains will be unbearable; [12] it is too late. "Did I not say to

[11] In *Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques* we have observed (vol. i, p. 245) that the tomb shown at Bethany at the present time hardly answers this description.

[12] The science of embalming was very imperfect among the Jews. They removed no portion of the body, neither intestines nor other parts especially likely to decompose. Enveloping it in bands and aromatics, they thought this sufficient to prevent putrefaction.

thee," Jesus responds in solemn tones, "that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" Although surprising, the weakening of faith which Martha seems to have experienced here is not inexplicable. There are moments when, in a woman's heart, affection readily conceives the most chimerical of fears and, taking these fears for dangers, she lingers over suppositions which, in cooler moments, she would never have entertained. What if Jesus should not succeed? this faithful friend was saying to herself. And yet her profession of faith a moment ago had been as explicit as Peter's on the road to Cæsarea.

The multitude, on the other hand, was a prey to indescribable emotion. When the stone was rolled back from the tomb there was a solemn silence.

Jesus advanced toward the gloomy entrance. It was His intention to render all doubt impossible as to the nature and import of the act He was about to accomplish. It had once been said: "He doth His miracles in the name of Satan." To-day He will put an end to that objection forever. In the presence of this multitude, He will solemnly invoke the name of His Father. If the prodigy is achieved, it shall be proved that God is aiding Him in His teaching and in His works. His credentials shall have been set forth, and He shall have triumphantly established before the most incredulous that He is truly the Messiah. His audience is incapable of admitting more. To act as God before them would be to go beyond their moral temperament and to scandalise them. To diseased eyes the light must be presented with care. Therefore Jesus will speak as man, and will veil His divinity. And yet in His filial words the attentive ear will detect the intimate, permanent, perfect union that exists between Him and the Father. He will pray, but without any fear of refusal. To ask and to be heard are synonymous for Him. For

in His person the two natures, divine and human, are so intimately united that the God could refuse nothing to the man, any more than, in the eternal union of the Trinity, the Father could refuse aught to His Son: "Father," exclaims Jesus, lifting His eyes to heaven, "I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it; that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." So God is manifestly participating in that which is about to occur. If the dead man revive, either God is not God, or Jesus is His representative on earth. Then, with a loud voice, that penetrates the depths of the sepulchre to awaken the sleeping man: "Lazarus," commanded Jesus, "come forth!" [13] And the dead man, shaken in his sleep by this sovereign command, arises. His feet and hands are enclosed in bands, his face covered with the shroud. He essays to walk a step. The crowd is in profound stupor. Before this body, which so clearly proves itself alive beneath the trappings of death, all are silent and motionless. The Evangelist, who relates the prodigy, seems himself to be under the awful impression which he then received. Meanwhile, in the midst of the general amazement, Jesus, as calm as if He were effecting the most ordinary of His charitable works, bids those who are present: "Loose him, and let him go." It was as if He had meant to say: "I have done My work, do yours; take from him the bonds that detain him. He asks only freedom to move and to return with you into his house."

The Evangelist says nothing of the touching scene that must have followed the performance of this miracle, of the joy or the gratitude of the two sisters, of Lazarus' sentiments, and of the Apostles' enthusiasm. He keeps

[13] It is remarkable that in the Greek text, Jesus does not employ any verb in this imperative command to death: δεῦρο ἔξω.

straight on to his goal, to his chief object, which is the effect of so important an event with regard to Jesus. In the course of his narrative, he has shown us the Master thinking of the storm which this miracle would stir up in Jerusalem, and he concludes by showing how deeply founded were His gloomy forebodings.

According to his account, in fact, in the souls of many a great work of religion had been effected. The prodigy was conclusive; they believed in the Messianic character of Jesus, and openly professed it. Others, on the contrary, entertained quite opposite sentiments, and, losing not an instant, they hurried to Jerusalem to report to the Pharisees what had occurred. It was to the hostile party, of course, that they brought the news, in the hope of bringing matters to a head. Their plan was wholly successful.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SANHEDRIM DECIDES TO MAKE AWAY WITH JESUS—HE RETREATS TO EPHREM

Solemn Assembly of the Sanhedrim — A Probable Account of the Meeting — Coarse and Brutal Words of Caiphas—His Involuntary Prophecy—Jesus Retreats to Ephrem—The Apostles Must Pray Constantly That the Kingdom of God May Come—Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow. (St. John xi, 47–54; St. Luke xviii, 1–8.)

The excitement to which the news of such a miracle gave rise in Jerusalem itself and in the country round about, drew from the chiefs of Israel the declaration that they must needs hold an official assembly and consider the situation. It seemed to them to be grave, and all the prudence of the Sanhedrim was none too great to solve the difficulty.[1] To permit Jesus to be acclaimed publicly as Messiah would be to accept all the contingencies that would follow. For a religious revolution, according to them, implied a social revolution. The coming of the Messiah could not but be the restoration of the theocracy in Israel,

[1] St. John (xi, 47) says that the assembly of the Great Council was convoked by the chief-priests and the Pharisees, that is, at the instigation of the latter and by the authority of the former.

and, consequently, the suppression of the foreign yoke. But the Romans, ordinarily, never let go their conquered prey without a struggle. And then what combats, what bloody strife, perchance, what a catastrophe might result! Should they fail in this enterprise, it would be the last of the Jewish people. They had already too deeply felt the weight of the iron hand laid by Rome on the shoulder of any who essayed to shake off the authority of Cæsar; why bring it on again? This is what the timorous said. Such were the Sadducees. The patriots made no reply. Before all else they were Pharisees, and for them to allow Jesus' influence to grow would be to welcome their own downfall. The sectarian spirit never lapses. The Prophet of Nazareth appeared to them an enemy as odious as their Roman oppressors. Thus we see how, although desirous of the deliverance of Israel, the great majority feared to allow it to be undertaken. After having so eagerly invoked the Messiah, these leaders of the people were angered at seeing Him come.

As some were desirous of preserving their prosperity, and others were endeavouring to maintain their religious authority, it was evident that each party placed its personal interests before everything else. Thus is explained the manner in which the affair was brought before the Great Council, and the reflections which the Evangelist puts on the lips of the judges. "What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation." The danger seemed the more imminent, as the Feast of the Passover was at hand. In the presence of the great Thaumaturgus, the popular enthusiasm might run to every extreme. Of the religious question itself not a word was said. It was difficult to deny the miracle; the witnesses were too numerous, and it seemed

no less so to contest its force. The real issue was thus set aside. The question of the public safety alone was discussed, and we know of what crimes judges are capable when they act with this sole thought in mind. The conference waxed stormy. The most diverse arguments ran counter to each other without any precise result. A few partisans of Jesus hazarded, perhaps, timid protests, but these were rare. Others, divided between their patriotic aspirations and their religious repugnances, undecided between their duty and their apprehensions, sought a middle course. Their idea was to submit Jesus to a new trial, to cite Him before the tribunal, to learn His plans and intentions. These partisans must have been numerous. It was probably against them that the high-priest then in office made the following brutal attack: "You know nothing; neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

He who spoke thus was a Sadducee; in his language we discover the cynical rudeness which, according to Josephus, was characteristic of this positivist sect.[2] His name, or rather his surname, was Caiphas.[3] That year,[4] which

[2] Josephus says (*B. J.*, ii, 8, 24): Σαδδουκαίων καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὸ ἦθος ἀγριώτερον.

[3] Caiphas, from the Aramaic *Keipha* and from the Hebrew *Keiph* ("stone," "rock"), the same as Cephas, was only a surname expressive, perhaps, of the harshness of his proud disposition. We have seen how Jesus, with another meaning, had given this same surname to him who was to be high-priest in the New Law. The true name of this high-priest was Joseph. (See *Antiq.*, xviii, 2, 2, and xviii, 4, 2.)

[4] Although the Evangelist says that Caiphas was the high-priest of that year, it is not because he is ignorant of the prerogative of irremovability that belongs to the high-priesthood; but he knows that in reality the Romans had suppressed this life dignity. The high-priest being the very soul of the Jewish nation, it appeared dangerous to the conquerors to allow the same personage time to establish his popularity on a deep basis. Caiphas' immediate predecessors, Simon, Eleazar, Ismael, had not retained the high-priesthood for more than a year each. (*Antiq.*, xviii, 2, 2.) Hence from that time forth the people expected to see the high-priest changed each year, and

was to be the last of the Ancient Covenant, he was fulfilling the functions of high-priest. To him then came the sad glory of exhausting the powers of his priesthood in the immolation of the great Victim Who was to inaugurate the New Covenant. It is to that end that he now condemns Jesus to death. The true force of his homicidal words, as the Evangelist observes, escapes him, and he prophesies involuntarily, for Jesus shall die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but for mankind, whose various families He shall unite in one. God is sometimes pleased thus to give to the words of the wicked a meaning which they themselves do not suspect. Thereby He demonstrates that, in spite of their perverse wills, His all-powerful hand directs events, and assures the reign of His Providence even through the crimes of men. When Pilate, in derision, causes the royalty of Jesus Christ to be proclaimed from the top of the Cross in the three languages of the civilised world, it is evident that, criminal as he is, he prophesies unconsciously the universal reign of the Messiah. When the Jews call down the blood of the Crucified upon their heads and upon those of their children, they do not dream that their curse is an oracle whose fulfilment future ages shall behold in consternation. There, in the full assembly of the Sanhedrim, the divine irony had a special reason for thus dictating to Caiphas this bloody prediction: high-priest and official mediator between God and the people, the wretched man was the authorised organ of the Divinity in Israel. To prophesy was his right.

However iniquitous so radical a counsel might be, the authority of the man who gave it caused it to prevail. In this sublime assembly of the sages of Israel, a majority

the Evangelist speaks under that impression. It may be, too, that in mentioning that year with marked intention, he meant to emphasise the prophetic date when the new priesthood was to succeed the old.

was found to decree that, without a hearing, without a trial, by the simple fact that He was working miracles and might present Himself as Messiah, Jesus should be put to death. It was still a far cry, indeed, from the decision to its execution; for the Sanhedrim did not hold absolutely in their own hands the right to inflict capital punishment; but from that time forward they held a series of meetings with a view to carrying out the resolution they had adopted.

Aided by intrigue, the enemies of Jesus were certain of attaining their end. He, Who until now had escaped all partisan plots, the sudden but transitory overflow of popular fury, the timidly undertaken plans for gaining possession of His Person,[5] could no longer avoid the sentence which had been juridically pronounced. According to what the Evangelist says, the order was officially made known to every believer to hasten to reveal, as soon as possible, the place of His retreat.[6] Not that the Master absolutely could not be found, but it was necessary that by this public summons all should know how dangerous and criminal He was adjudged to be. They sought first to disgrace Him, the more effectively afterward to destroy Him.

Jesus made no delay in quitting the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. He knew that He could no longer appear in any place where the hierarchical party had its representatives. The Evangelist tells us that He directed His steps toward the country near the desert, and took refuge in a city called Ephrem.[7] The majority of geographers iden-

[5] *St. John* v, 16–18; ix, 22; vii, 32; *St. Mark* iii, 6.

[6] *St. John* xi, 57. If we may believe a Jewish tradition found in the *Gemara* of Babylon (Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* in h. l.), during the forty days that preceded the Passover a crier regularly proclaimed that Jesus, a seducer of the people, was to be put to death. This would be quite in accordance with the decision of the Sanhedrim.

[7] In *Jos.* xviii, 23–24, Ephrem is named with Ophni (Djifneh at the present time); in *I Kings* xiii, 16, it is near Machmas. According to *II Paralip.*

tify Ephrem with the modern Taiyibeh. In that case, the desert mentioned would not be that of Juda, but the desert of Bethaven, which is a continuation of it. However, this identification seems arbitrary. We know that near the desert of Juda itself (and very probably this is the desert referred to in the Gospel) there was an ancient city the ruins of which, El-Phara, recall the name Ephrem—written Ophra by some, Ephron by others—much better than Taiyibeh. Moreover, the terebinth of Pharan, or Paran, which we visited on the abrupt cliffs of Ouadhi-Pharah, became famous owing to the monks who settled there at an early date. We should not therefore be wrong in believing that it preserved the memory of Jesus' sojourn in this fearful solitude. There the hatred of the Pharisees would have found it difficult to reach Him, even though they had decreed His death. The desert was the safest refuge for fugitives. At Taiyibeh Jesus would have been in a centre but little isolated. It is true that from there He could easily pass over into Samaria. But it was on the desert especially that He seemed to rely. In any case, it was in a town that would afford Him refuge that Jesus wished to spend some time in recollection. This isolation seemed to Him a favourable opportunity to give once more important instructions to His disciples, and to fortify His own heart for the final test. There could be nothing more

xiii, 19, it was near Bethel and Jesana. Josephus (*B. J.*, iv, 9, 9) locates it nearly at the height of Bethel, and not far from that city. Vespasian left a garrison in Ephrem and from there marched into Jerusalem. All this determined Robinson and the other geographers to identify Ephrem with Taiyibeh. But, on the other hand, Eusebius in the *Onomasticon* says that Ephrem was of the tribe of Juda in the region Ælia at the eighth mile, and we would prefer to look for it at El-Phara. The new editions of this book have, it is true, "at the twentieth mile," but this is probably because St. Jerome (*de Situ et Nom. loc. Hebr.*) had corrected this figure at the same time that he suppressed *περὶ τὰ ὄρια* Αἰλίας, to insert *contra septentrionem*. The mosaic of *Madaba*, recently discovered, follows his indication.

natural than that the Victim should seek to sanctify Himself by separation from the world, in union with God, and by the free offering of Himself.

For their part, the Apostles could not but be aware of the gravity of this solemn beginning of the end. The timid hearts among them wished, perhaps, that the Kingdom of God had not come so soon, that they might not have to witness its terrible forerunners. The ardent souls of others were discouraged by the thought that the general hostility would postpone its coming. In view of the publicity given to the resolutions of the Great Council, any illusion as to the future appeared difficult. These simple Galileans knew not that the Kingdom of God comes in spite of the wicked, when the righteous demand it. But the duty of the righteous is to interrupt their supplications only when they have been answered. In order to restore their confidence, Jesus said to them: "There was a judge in a certain city who feared not God nor regarded man. And there was a certain widow in that same city, and she came to him, saying: Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a long time." There was nothing extraordinary in the fact itself; for, although there were many judges in Israel—Moses had placed them at the gate of every city—just judges were rare, and oppressed widows often had to suffer. In this parable the magistrate's iniquity is complete: he respects nothing either in heaven or on earth, and the poor woman is forced to claim in vain each day that which her right should have assured her at her first hearing.

Finally, however, weary of listening to her supplications, he who troubled himself neither about God nor about his fellows, ended by turning his attention to his own interests. "Although I fear not God, nor regard man," he said with cynical pride, "yet because this widow is trouble-

some to me, I will avenge her, lest continually coming she weary me." [8]

Such was the parable. Here is the application which Jesus made of it: "Hear," said He, "what the unjust judge saith." For there is a lesson to learn here. He, wicked, harsh, careless of his duties as he was, finally surrenders to the demands unceasingly renewed by this poor widow; and will not God, Who is good, tender, and just, hearken to the voice of His children? When the unjust judge allows himself to be moved, "will not God revenge His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He have patience in their regard? I say to you that He will quickly revenge them." Therefore let there be no discouragement. The poor widow represents mankind oppressed by sin for ages. Mankind calls for light, for truth, for the right to happiness. All this shall be given mankind by the Messiah in His expiatory death and the diffusion of His doctrine. The great souls of mankind—and Jesus recognises some around Him—have only to pray persistently, raising their cry of distress to heaven. The hour of deliverance is at hand. The wicked shall not postpone it. By seeking to check it, they only hasten it on. The Kingdom of God is there, not as men imagine it, but as God has willed it. Believing souls, be brave!

"But yet," sadly adds the Master, "the Son of man when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?" Shall the widow have persevered in her supplication and in the hope of obtaining what she desires?

[8] Some taking in a literal sense these words which we think better to accept in a figurative sense, translate: "I will avenge, lest continually coming she may tear out my eyes." The verb ὑπωπιάζω means to strike one below the eyes. It comes from ὑπώπιον, a compound of ὑπό and ὤψ. It is found employed in the sense of wounding some one under the eyes, in Aristotle, *Rhet.*, iii, 11; Diog. Laert., vi, 89. St. Paul (*I Cor.* xi, 27) uses it to qualify the severity which he inflicts upon his own body.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THE FIRST BECOME LAST AND THE LAST FIRST

Of Ten Lepers Who Are Healed, Only One Shows Gratitude—He Is a Samaritan Whom Faith Makes Whole—Parable of the Labourers Sent to the Vineyard—The Significance of the Penny Given to Each One—The Call to Salvation Not Identical with Salvation Itself — Story of the Rich Young Man — After Having Observed the Commandments, He Hesitates Before the Evangelical Counsels—His Riches a Hindrance to His Entering Heaven—Peter's Question—The Reward of Those Who Abandon All. (St. Luke xvii, 12–19; St. Matthew xx, 1–16; St. Luke xviii, 18–30; St. Mark x, 17–31; St. Matthew xix, 16–30.[1])

Jesus did not stay long at Ephrem. The Paschal feasts were approaching, and it was His intention to join the Galilean caravans as they passed through Peræa on their way to Jerusalem. Either to avoid crossing the territory of Judea, where His enemies were watching for Him, or to evangelise, as He went along, the mountains of Samaria, where, at the beginning of His ministry, He had so happily

[1] We have gathered in this chapter certain incidents and discourses to which no precise dates are assigned by the Evangelists.

sown the good seed, He directed His steps toward the north. Then turning to the east, He intended to reach, in His own good time, the most frequented fords of the Jordan, in the neighbourhood of Beisan, where the caravans going up to the Paschal festival would soon pass.

St. Luke here has a word which proves the fidelity of the documents from which he derives his information, and which he sets down, perhaps without grasping their full significance. In one of the two clauses in which he recalls that Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, begun almost two months before, still continued, he observes that the Master traversed the frontier regions of Samaria and Galilee, or, perhaps, crossed through these two provinces,[2] beginning with Samaria. Whichever meaning we give to this rather obscure text, it is evident that, since Samaria is mentioned before Galilee, Jesus' journey was from the south toward the north. He went from Ephrem toward the plain of Esdrelon, where, turning to the right, without advancing farther, He proceeded along the borders both of Samaria and Galilee. In that part of Palestine, as in Peræa, the hierarchical party had no influence. The Master resumed His preaching, multiplying as He went the miraculous cures which attested the divinity of His doctrine.

Thus one day, as He was on the point of entering a village, He encountered a group of lepers. There were ten of them. In all probability these unfortunate beings,

[2] The text διήρχετο διὰ μέσου Σαμαρείας καὶ Γαλιλαίας may indeed signify either that Jesus traversed successively the interior of Samaria and Galilee or only that He advanced between these two countries. The use of the phrase διὰ μέσου in the latter sense is quite frequent. (Comp. Xenophon, *Anab.*, i, 4–4, where he speaks of a river flowing between two ramparts; Plato, *Leg.*, vii, p. 805; comp. *Ezech.* xxii, 26; *Judges* xv, 4; *III Kings* v, 12.) This is the only sense acceptable in this instance, for we cannot admit that the Evangelist, showing how Jesus continued His journey to Jerusalem (ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ), makes Him traverse Galilee from one end to the other (διὰ μέσου). It will be noticed that he puts no article before the names of the provinces.

dwelling together in some solitary place in the neighbourhood, had suddenly been informed that He was passing by. Among them there was at least one Samaritan. We have just said that they were near the borders of Samaria. His presence therefore is not surprising, nor is his companionship with Jews. In the great woes of life national antipathies are effaced, and human brotherhood revives. Full of hope, they had hastened to meet the Thaumaturgus as He passed,[3] but through fear of the multitude they had stationed themselves at some distance from His path. The consciousness of their legal impurity made this a duty. As soon as the Master appeared, they strove to cry out to attract His attention. The leprosy, affecting all the cellular tissues, gave their voices a hoarse and stifled sound. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us," they said. Their mournful cry drew the Saviour's attention. Without further preface, He said to them: "Go, show yourselves to the priests." This was putting their faith to the test. Before healing them, He sent them to have their recovery proved. That they were to regain their health on the way, as the recompense of their obedient faith, was naturally understood.

In fact, while they were going in search of the priests,[4] they were suddenly cured. Without hesitation, one of them deemed it his duty to forget the priests to whom he was sent, and to remember only the Benefactor from Whom he was departing. Transported with joy and gratitude, he returned at once to the Master, glorifying God with a

[3] This is expressed in the verb *ἀπήντησαν*.

[4] It has been asked to what priests Jesus had sent the Samaritan leper. The most simple answer is that Jesus, speaking in a general way to a group of Jews, left to the Samaritan who happened to be among them, the care of deciding what he had to do himself. Is it not reasonable to suppose that he found the religion of the Thaumaturgus Who healed him better than his own, and concluded from this that salvation came from the Jews?

loud voice.[5] He rejoined Him, no doubt, in the very town which He had just entered, for the rapidity of the narration gives us to understand that all this occurred within a brief space of time. There he threw himself at His feet, and gave utterance to his gratitude.

This conduct on the leper's part seems perfectly natural, and yet it was praised as most meritorious, probably because of its contrast with the ingratitude or the indifference of the nine lepers who did not return. When Jesus saw him alone obedient to the voice of gratitude, He experienced a great feeling of sadness. In this group of lepers He read the future history of mankind. The immense majority will be ungrateful and unloving even after the Redemption. "Were not ten made clean?" He asked, "and where are the nine?" His heart, which had counted the number of these unfortunates, certainly had a right to count the number of the grateful. What a difference! There were ten who supplicated Him a moment ago; there is but one to thank Him now, and even he is not a Jew but a Samaritan. "There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger?" What had become of the others? More occupied with themselves than with their Benefactor, they had hastened first of all to have their recovery legally established, that they might the sooner resume their social relations. They had postponed their thanksgiving until later. The first hour belongs to self; the second will, perhaps, be devoted to gratitude. Notwithstanding his contemptible origin, the Samaritan had understood his duty in another sense. Moved by a more generous heart, he came to express his

[5] It may be noted, by the way, that the leper had been completely healed; even his voice, which had been hoarse, at once became strong (*μετὰ φωνῆς μεγάλης*). These are the details of an Evangelist-physician such as St. Luke was, and they confirm the authenticity of the narrative.

thanks first; afterward he will look to the observance of legal prescriptions. For him the natural law of gratitude takes precedence of the ceremonial law of purification. Therefore he has the happiness, while his humility holds him still at Jesus' feet, of hearing these consoling words: "Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole!" Does the Master mean that He confirms his cure, while He suspends that of the nine others? Does He confer also sanctity on his soul, after having restored health to his body? It is not an impossible supposition.

However that may be, once again, the last by birth in religious culture and in vocation to the faith, became the first, to the great displeasure of the latter, who by their evil dispositions became the last. No Pharisaic murmurings can alter the fact. It is better to adapt themselves to it as best they can, by letting grace do its work. Catholicity is the great law of the new economy. The Gospel puts an end to privileges, and places all men on a basis of perfect equality. It offers, to whoever will avail himself of it, the right to become a citizen of the Kingdom. We find this more explicitly indicated in a parable which is generally misunderstood by interpreters, and which comes here in its proper place. It treats of the labourers who were sent into the vineyard.

It was the season of the year when the proprietor begins to take an active interest in his lands. No sooner are the great rains over, than he summons all hands to stir up the soil, to dig about the foot of the vines, and to spread manure to insure a rich vintage. It was, doubtless, under the inspiration of the spectacle before His eyes that Jesus spoke as follows to His hearers: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day

he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing in the market-place idle." This was in keeping with the Oriental custom that brought together, with the tools of their trade in their hands, the unemployed labourers, waiting for some one to hire them. "And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour; and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go ye also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny; but when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way. I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first and the first last."

It is incorrect to conclude that the penny here given to each labourer without distinction represents eternal life. It can signify nothing else than the revelation of the Messiah to souls, their vocation to the Messianic Kingdom, their incorporation into the new society. For, let it be noticed,

this constitutes absolutely the same hire for all the labourers, while, according to Jesus, heaven reserves for the various merits of the elect various degrees of glory. Moreover, it is admitted that the jealous cannot enter into eternal bliss; and yet, according to the parable, they would be there with rancour in their hearts and bitter words on their lips. God Himself, were He to grant an equal recompense to the diverse works of His servants, would resemble a blind, capricious, unjust judge, unless we suppose that those who were called at the last hour compensated for the brief duration of their labour by its intensity. But this would be revamping the parable and inserting into it what is not there. For here nothing else than the partial gratuitousness of the penny for the late comers is found emphasised. But while this gratuitousness is very justly predicated of grace, inasmuch as grace always leaves human liberty the right of augmenting merit, it is wrongly said of eternal salvation which must be gained by virtue. Grace is distributed through mercy, salvation is adjudged in justice. Hence, the reason why, among so many that are called to the light of the Gospel, there may be but few admitted to the life of heaven. If the penny signified paradise, since all the labourers assembled receive it, we should be forced to say that, contrary to the Master's words, there are as many chosen as called.

It is the vocation of all peoples to the faith, without distinction of race or religion, that is manifestly taught in this parable. Jesus means to eradicate, under the eyes of the Jews who hear Him, the scandal of a Samaritan leper entering into the Messianic Kingdom. The householder is God Who goes out to call all men of goodwill to labour in His vineyard, that is, for His glory, by achieving their own salvation. As a recompense for their efforts and as a means of obtaining eternal life, He promises them

a Redeemer. So fair a prospect should be enough to spur on even the most lax and undecided.

The first to be called are the children of Israel, for as we look back from age to age, we see God ever exhorting them to observe His law. We may even say that they are born guests of the Kingdom, since their religious filiation dates back through the patriarchs to Adam. They, then, have laboured long, but, like true hirelings, they did so less through love than through self-interest.

In the public square, which is the world, stand a multitude of souls eager for work and awaiting only a summons. There are found sinners, publicans, Samaritans, pagan philosophers, those labourers anxious and discouraged, for they know not whither their way lies. The Master of the vineyard, as He meets them, proposes that they hire themselves out. It is not merely by the voice of conscience that He speaks to them, otherwise we might say that every man has been called from his birth. It is by the preaching of the Gospel. They are invited to produce fruits worthy of penance, in order to merit admission into the Church which is about to be established.

When evening comes, the Son of Man, ready to depart from earth, will make a definite choice of citizens for the Kingdom which He has founded here below. All those who, having been called to repentance and to faith in the Messiah, shall have responded generously to this summons, shall see the door of the Church swing back before them, let them come whence they may and be their past what it may. By the sole fact that they arose at the Master's invitation and began their work, they have won this favour. Henceforth, abundant and efficacious divine grace shall be at their disposal; for to be incorporated into the Christian society is to have a share in all its treasures. Such is the true signification of the penny. The woman taken in sin,

the publican, the Samaritan have already received it, since they have entered into the Kingdom.

The Jews, in turn, await it, but they imagine it is to be given to them in large measure. They count on at least a place of honour for themselves in the new society. Since it is not to be so, their pride receives a deep-felt rebuff. Then they recall their long labours, and vaunt them. The others have only just come, while they have borne the crushing weight of the law throughout their whole lives. In justice, is it right to equalise them all with one and the same recompense? As in the parable of the prodigal, the jealous and selfish character of the Jewish people reveals itself here in its entirety. The good fortune of others seems to them to lessen their own good fortune. Gently does God remind them that He has accomplished what was promised to their fathers, namely, the manifestation of the Messiah. The servile obedience of this ungenerous people has therefore been fittingly repaid. It is theirs, if they will, to seat themselves in the light of the Gospel, and to derive therefrom, with the others, life and happiness. The sun has rays enough to enlighten without frustrating the rights of any, even of those who had merited the reception of its light to a lesser degree than others. It furnishes light without impoverishing itself. In like manner, God sets His truth within the reach of all. If the Jews are more worthy of it than the rest of the world, so much the better for them; later on, they shall certainly be rewarded according to their deserts. For the present, each one has only to take his penny and to make it bear fruit while he awaits the future. For, although the principal part in the first act of the supernatural drama belongs to mercy, in the second, which marks the critical stage, it will belong to justice. Then only shall the work of each one be strictly appraised and

duly rewarded. The first invitation leads to-day to Jesus, the Saviour; the second shall guide later on to Jesus, the Rewarder. Many may have received the former, and yet not have the honour of the latter. Hence it is said: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Had there been any need of proving this thesis—that the summons to the Kingdom of God on earth does not imply as a consequence admission into the Kingdom of Heaven, and that, of the two graces, man can receive one without obtaining the other—an incident which occurred almost immediately might have been employed as a decisive argument.

As they journeyed on, a young man of great wealth and high social position [6] came to meet the Saviour. With the enthusiasm of his age and the faith of a neophyte, he fell on his knees and exclaimed: "Good Master, what shall I do to obtain everlasting life?" His question bears witness to an excellent desire, but the title which he gives to Jesus is insufficient homage, if he wishes to recognise in Him the Messiah. His fine burst of admiration gave hope of a happier profession of faith. He to Whom this new proselyte addresses himself is more than a good Master. Since Peter's famous speech on the way to Cæsarea many others have saluted Him as the Christ and the Son of the living God. A light from heaven had guided them, divine reasoning is now to essay the instruction of this young man. Jesus with His usual graciousness would lead him by natural arguments to the conclusion which his religious consciousness had not suggested to him. "Why dost thou call Me good?" He says to him; "none is good but God

[6] The title of ruler (ἄρχων), which St. Luke gives him, signifies doubtless that he was the ruler of a Synagogue, and, in spite of his youth—St. Matthew (xix, 22) calls him νεανίσκος—honoured with the esteem of his fellow-citizens. (Comp. *St. Luke* viii, 41; *St. Matt.* ix, 18; *St. Mark* v, 22.)

alone." Therefore He is not good or He is God.[7] The dilemma cannot be set aside. If He is not good, why bestow this praise upon Him? If He is good, why not salute Him as the Son of God? If the neophyte is still undecided as to the title which he must give Him, let him hold his peace. Respectful silence were less offensive than a testimonial of human probity awarded to Him Who participates in the sanctity of God. Jesus rejects this praise here only because its very insufficiency renders it an offence.[8]

However, after this first response, which was to rectify the ideas of this young enthusiast and to place him on the road to a more accurate faith, the Master takes up the question which he proposed. "If thou wilt enter into life," He says, "keep the commandments." For the law was the official guide that would conduct every Jew by the hand, as it were, to the Messianic Kingdom. But this young man, proud of his virtue and proud, too, of his desire to do good, asks what commandments may be meant. Are they the law properly so called, or the legal prescriptions, not the most ancient, written down in the books of Moses, but the most recent, invented by the zeal of the Pharisees? As for the first, certainly he observes them; but the second, must he keep them too? Are they suitable for the new Kingdom? Such is the meaning of his reply: "Which?" With unfaltering kindness Jesus at once enters into details: "Thou knowest the commandments," He says; "thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother, and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

[7] The Master here takes the word *good* in its most absolute sense, which was not the case with the young man.

[8] On certain other occasions, in fact, He had called Himself the Good Shepherd.

Jesus does not mention man's duties to God. He supposes that His interrogator scrupulously observes them, since, notwithstanding his youth, he has deserved to become ruler of a Synagogue. He is content with calling his attention to the laws of the second table. They were the least respected, because they were more directly opposed to the selfish nature of the Jewish people. Through fear and through self-interest these latter felt themselves forced to serve God, while they respected the rights of men only reluctantly and with painful restraint of all their longings. In a moment's time, the young man reviews his whole life, and with innocent satisfaction he exclaims: "Master, all these things I have observed from my youth. What is yet wanting to me?" On hearing this response which testified to an upright soul, although somewhat self-sufficient, Jesus looked at him attentively and "loved him." [9] His eye had discerned in him a great fund of goodness, checked in its development, like the seed, by the thorns of luxury and wealth.

From this fixed look upon the young man, the expression of which recalled that which long before had preceded Simon Peter's vocation,[10] it was easy to see that the Master was on the point of giving a decisive grace. "Yet one thing is wanting unto thee," He said; "if thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Beyond and above the divine precepts are the evangelical counsels. The man who has fulfilled God's law and still feels the desire of higher perfection has only to conform himself to them. To give alms, while at the same time

[9] This detail, with all its delicacy, is due to the pen of St. Mark. Peter, accustomed to read in the Master's face the impressions that moved His soul, must have remembered this incident better than the others, and it was from him, no doubt, that St. Mark received it.

[10] *St. John* i, 43.

preserving one's fortune, is well. But to sacrifice one's fortune itself is still better. If the young proselyte feels in himself the courage to become perfect, let him imitate Him Whose advice he seeks, and detach himself from everything, as Jesus has done. In that way he shall be able, entering into the Kingdom of Heaven absolutely free, to abandon himself, like a generous son, to the good pleasure of his Father, and to turn his mind unencumbered to the work of doing good. Absolute poverty is the first requirement for the true apostolate. If he has the courage to reduce himself to it, he shall have the honour of being an Apostle. The reward is well worth the sacrifice.

Unfortunately this young man's soul was enthusiastic rather than energetic. To exalted temperaments extreme measures may appear smiling from afar, but near at hand they frequently inspire terror. He would have been ready to do much, had there been no sacrifice to make; as if all great achievements had not their real foundation in the immolation of him who produces them! It was with his good dispositions as with the grain that fell on soil having no depth. They were to perish while yet scarcely born. The Master's words had troubled his soul like a lightning-stroke. He suddenly drew back, and, finding the goal beyond his strength, he showed his annoyance. It seemed painful to him to make no response to the Master's words; while to reply was even more so. "Being struck sad at that saying," says the Evangelist,[11] "he went away

[11] *The Gospel of the Hebrews*, cited by Origen, *in Matt.* xix, 19, says: "The rich man then began to scratch his head; what he had heard was not pleasing to him. And the Master said to him: How can you then pretend to have fulfilled the law since it is said in that law: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; and yet there are many of thy brethren, children of Abraham, like unto you, who dwell in the mire and are dying of hunger, while thou sittest at thy table loaded with richest foods, and takest from it nothing to cast to the poor?" The vulgarity of this amplification needs no comment. It recalls another passage, already cited, in which the man

sorrowful; for he had great possessions." No one knows if he ever had the courage to return to the Master. Grace has its hour, and he who contemns it one day is not sure to find it the next.

As if in painful surprise Himself at this failure, Jesus looked about upon those who surrounded Him, and, speaking to His disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches," He exclaimed, "enter into the Kingdom of God!" The silence and stupefaction of the gathering into the midst of whom fell these words, accentuated their gravity and even their awfulness. The disciples were deeply moved. "Children," repeated the Master sympathetically, "how hard it is for them that trust in riches, to enter into the Kingdom of God!" For no man can imagine a stronger bond to rivet one to earth nor a better food for the nurture of evil instincts. In a moment of enthusiasm, one thinks himself capable of sacrificing all, he even offers his life, as has been said; but when the Lord comes to take it, he finds it too intimately bound up with self to permit him to part with it. The soul's natural flight is toward the Kingdom of God; but, tied down to the goods of this world, it unceasingly reverts to matter like the captive bird whose flight a thread will check. The greater the wealth, the more numerous the bonds! Hence not only is salvation difficult for the rich, but, humanly speaking, for them it is impossible. "It is easier," Jesus adds, "for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

"An elephant before a needle's eye,"[12] was a proverb

with the withered hand insists on mentioning in his prayer that he is a mason, etc. (St. Jerome, *in Matt.* xii, 9.)

[12] See Lightfoot and Schoettgen on this passage, and the *Koran*, vii, 38. Those who have translated κάμηλος by *cable*, have forgotten that it should be κάμιλος, and that the turn of the phrase, with the verb εἰσελθεῖν, supposes that he who is to pass through has feet. The explanation of those authors who understand by *the eye of a needle* the low and narrow gates at the entrance

in the Orient, employed to denote an insurmountable difficulty. If Jesus here substitutes "camel" for "elephant," it is probably because the former was the more common among the Jews. On hearing this new assertion, which transformed the difficulty into an impossibility, the disciples cried out in terror: "Who then can be saved?" Jesus, looking on them with tenderest mercy, replied: "With men it is impossible; but not with God. For all things are possible with God." So to reassure their discouraged zeal, He gave them to understand that His terrible declaration did not condemn every apostolate to fruitlessness in the sight of wealth. God's grace can accomplish that which seems impossible to man's weakness. Not rarely is it pleased, now to cut with violence the bonds that hold the soul, that it may soar at will, now, for reasons of profound wisdom, to maintain them still, but so detested, or better so relaxed, that in reality they constitute only a humiliation, and no longer a danger. Readiness for sacrifice is the duty of all. Effectual sacrifice is the glory of only the few.

Peter perceives it well. Like the young man, he, too, was invited to leave all and to follow Jesus, and he left all because God gave him the courage to do it. If he had forgotten it, Jesus's look has just reminded him of it. His companions have done the same. This thought emboldens him. "Behold," he cries out, "we have left all things, and have followed Thee; what therefore shall we have?" It may be true that these good Galileans did not sacrifice great riches; but everything is relative in this world. To a fisherman, his cabin and his nets are a fortune, and he parts with them not without regret. The Apostles' merit

of cities, strives especially to do away with an absolute impossibility, and yet it is this same impossibility from a human point of view which, in a paradoxical form, Jesus wishes to show.

is that, though having little, they have nevertheless abandoned all, and in this word *all* are comprised, together with the *aurea mediocritas* of the labourer, the sweets of domestic life, and the most legitimate pleasures of the heart. From this point of view, they mean to yield to none in the generosity of their sacrifice. The rich young man, had he shown a little more courage, would have assured himself a treasure in heaven; what, therefore, shall be theirs? Jesus replied: "Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The regeneration or palingenesis here spoken of is man's reinstatement with increase, in that condition of happiness which was his at the beginning of the world. The Jews designated by one of these two names the return of the people after the captivity of Babylon,[13] or again, the renewal of the earth after the deluge.[14] But in Christianity palingenesis can be nothing else than the return to the state in which mankind was with relation to God before the fall. It is a new birth which shall be effected when the old man is completely exterminated. The Son of God has come down to earth to bring about this restoration. The Jews, mingling their carnal notions with a fact altogether spiritual, are grossly mistaken in looking for the re-establishment of the theocratic royalty in the natural and visible order. They must not hope for a conquering Messiah. If, after them, but in another sense, certain Christians still deceive themselves and believe that a thousand years shall be given, at the end of the world, for the fulfilment of these promises in a sphere wholly human, it is their own fault. According to the Master the palingenesis, which

[13] Josephus, *Antiq.*, ii, 3, 9.
[14] Philo, *Vita Moysis*, lib. II, t. ii, pp. 114–31.

we must identify with the inauguration of the Messianic reign, has begun in time with the preaching of the Gospel and shall be consummated in eternity by the general judgment. From now on, the Apostles are going to have their reward in the new Church. They are to be its pillars. They will sit as true judges, with the mission of promulgating doctrine, of condemning error, of modifying discipline, and of propagating spiritual powers. They will govern, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, the entire Christian society. This, however, is to be but the beginning of their reward. When the Church shall pass from time to eternity, at the moment when she shall have to be judged in each one of her members, they shall again appear to deal out justice with greater reason, since all men shall be examined according to the principles of the same faith of which they shall have been themselves the first preachers and the models.

Besides, though not called to occupy a judge's throne, like the Apostles, every true believer shall nevertheless have the twofold reward of the present and of the future life. "There is no man," Jesus adds, "that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for My sake and for the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time, . . . and in the world to come life everlasting." From the beginning, in fact, the Church has been able to offer to him who had the courage to break forever with paganism, a more numerous, more loving, better chosen family than that which he has left; more considerable wealth, since each of the faithful had a right to the entire fortune of the community; more real consolations in the spirit of fraternity and the touching affection which united in one single heart and one single soul the members of the new society. This earthly reward has in a measure disappeared, as the

Church, spreading abroad, has lost somewhat of her cohesion, of her severity, and of her family spirit. To discover it again in our day, we must knock at the door of one of the monasteries wherein is still perpetuated the ideal life of primitive Christianity. To him who gives himself generously, the religious orders present a more influential family, surer resources, and greater credit. This is the hundredfold given on earth.

As for those who follow Jesus while still clinging to their human attachments—and their number has become greater and greater, as the danger of losing one's soul at the domestic hearth has become less evident, and the necessity of spreading the Gospel in the world less urgent—they have separated themselves from the goods of earth only in spirit, they must expect only the spiritual reward in the future life after having felt the worries of the present. The more they substitute God in their hearts for the sensible objects that beset them, the more abundantly shall they find Him again in eternity. This is the hundredfold promised to their virtue.

It is God Who will judge of the detachment of each one, and His infallible appreciation will more than once effect strange surprises for our short-sightedness. By a change as frequent as it must be sudden, "many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

CHAPTER XVIII

MARRIAGE, CELIBACY, AND CHILDREN IN THE EYES OF JESUS

The Great Question of Divorce—Hillel and Schammaï—Jesus Is for God Against Both—He Recalls and Restores the Primitive Ordinance—Admirable Argumentation—The Objection Taken from Moses, and Its Answer—Absolute Indissolubility According to the New Law—The Excellence of Celibacy—Benediction of Little Children. (St. Matthew xix, 3–15; St. Mark x, 2–16; St. Luke xviii, 15–17.)

By short journeys each day, Jesus had again reached the confines of Galilee. Thence He crossed the Jordan and passed into Peræa, where the pilgrims began to arrive on their way to Jerusalem. No sooner had He arrived in those parts than He found Himself in the presence of the Pharisees and their evidences of hostility. Certain representatives of this sect, in fact, took pains to surround Him and endeavoured to compromise Him by putting a question which it seemed He could not answer without exciting the most lively opposition. They began in these terms: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The Mosaic law said:[1] "If a man take a wife and have her,

[1] *Deut.* xxiv, 1.

and she doth not find favour in his eyes for some uncleanness, he shall write a bill of divorce and shall give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." Among the Rabbis there was a lively discussion on the meaning of these words: *Ervath dabhar*. What was to be understood by the uncleanness, this unpleasant, detestable something which, according to Moses, was sufficient cause for divorce? Hillel, during his life, and his disciples after him, expounded the text in its broadest sense, and granted the husband the right of divorce for any reason that rendered his wife disagreeable to him. Even distaste alone sufficed to justify her dismissal.[2] Schammaï, the chief of the opposite school, would admit no cause for divorce other than adultery, or any crime against the chastity of marriage.[3] Perhaps both schools were far from the truth in their interpretation of this passage. For, on the one hand, Schammaï was mistaken in refusing to see in the context other causes of divorce than the infamy of adultery. If it is sufficient, according to the text, that the wife cease to be pleasing to her husband, there can be no doubt that she may come to that pass without having been false to conjugal fidelity. Hillel, on the other hand, was wrong in forgetting the spirit of the law, and in holding strictly to the letter. For he represented as a good thing that which at bottom was an evil. To tolerate and to approve are vastly different things. Moses's intention, in writing this article of the Law, had been to employ a vague and somewhat obscure formula, which should restrain the good and leave the less virtuous free. Not to place too many obstacles in the way of capricious preferences seemed

[2] Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.*, iv, 8, 23; *Autobiog.*, 73; Ewald, *Jahrb.*, x, p. 56 *et seq.* Rabbi Abika went further and judged that a man was justified in putting away his wife if he had found a more beautiful one.

[3] Cf. Selden, *De uxor. hebr.*, iii, 18; Keil, *Archäol.*, ii, p. 74.

to be the sole means of avoiding graver misfortunes. The Law-giver trusted to the individual conscience for the legitimacy of the motives which might be invoked.[4]

The two schools maintained their respective opinions with ardour, and the Pharisees would not have been loath to see Jesus take part in this great dispute. If He was for Hillel, He risked losing the esteem of all those sincere and rigid partisans whom, till that moment, the ordinary severity of His doctrine had gained Him. If He was for Schammaï—and everything indicated that He would lean to this side—He would stir up against Him the great multitude[5] that loved to cloak its licentious conduct under the appearance of legality. But this was not the greatest danger. He was, at the time, in the territory of Herod Antipas. To defend severe principles on the question of the indissolubility of marriage might seem to be a direct attack against the Tetrarch himself. We know that practically the latter had proved himself a cynical partisan of the loosest principles. He had put away his own legitimate wife and married his brother's. Perhaps Jesus would be led to take the same attitude before him as John the Baptist had, and run the same risk.

The young Teacher was far above such thoughts. With His first word, and without even discussing the arguments that divide them, He decides against both Hillel and Schammaï and shows that Moses' permission was a political condescension rather than the true expression of the moral

[4] An obscure law engages frank and honest men to take the surest way. They are inclined to accept it ordinarily in the narrowest sense. On the other hand, it does not stigmatise the conduct of the more lax, since it does not speak clearly enough to tax them with crime. In the matter of divorce this might have the advantage of checking the immorality which threatened to invade the Jewish family, as it had invaded the pagan family.

[5] The abuse of this permission of Moses had reached the last limits of licentiousness in the time of Jesus. The wife was dismissed for having burnt a roast. (*Talmud, Gittin*, ix, 10; Delitzsch, *Jesus und Hillel*, p. 27.)

law. It is on the ground of this law therefore that He considers the question. The primitive ordinance of creation is the ideal rule. The misfortunes of the times may have disturbed it, but He is come to restore it in all its former perfection and purity. His argumentation takes no other ground than that of the Scriptures.[6] "What did Moses command you?" He says to them. "Moses," they answered, "permitted to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away." This pretentious reply of theirs serves in itself as an opening for the entire doctrine that Jesus here establishes.[7] He expounds Moses by means of Moses, and shows that his concession of divorce was nothing else than violence prudently inflicted on the legislation given by God to primitive mankind, and whose limits and spirit he himself has fixed in his history of the first man. "Have ye not read," He says, "that He Who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause[8] shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."[9] Here then on the first page of the Old Testament are set down the manifold reasons that proclaim the indissolubility

[6] Once again, according to this passage, we see how the Saviour recognised and proclaimed the doctrinal authority of the books of Moses. He invokes, as undeniable authority, *Genesis*, in particular, and the very passages which are the most suspected by modern critics. He gives us an example of exegetical comparisons which are to set forth the truth in all its aspects. Taking a portion of His testimony from the first chapter of this book, and a portion from the second, He implies that both are not only authentic but mutually complementary.

[7] Observe the phrase *ἐπέτρεψεν Μωϋσῆς*, in which the verb attesting the permission is emphatically placed first.

[8] The expression *Ἕνεκεν τούτου* refers to the fact that God creating them male and female intended the irresistible attraction of one sex for the other.

[9] In *Gen.* ii, 24, it is Adam, and not God, who speaks these words; but Jesus could attribute them to God inasmuch as God inspired Adam to say them. It has been observed that the words *οἱ δύο* are not found in the present Hebrew text, but they are in the Samaritan and in the text of which the Septuagint is a translation.

of marriage. Man and woman are bound one to another by the most intimate ties. In the beginning they constituted only one; God created them simultaneously, the woman being in the man as an integral part. In life they should be only one, since He created them male and female in order to establish a couple, the woman being the natural complement of man. He did not create several women to permit Adam to change them from time to time, nor many men to serve Eve's caprice. Issuing one from the other, they exist one for the other, destined to join their lives in the most complete union of two beings forming only one body and one soul.

This instinct for oneness which God intended in creating two different sexes, is so strong that it supersedes all others. The ties that unite the son to his father and to his mother are broken, to allow the man to attach himself to his wife, and to become one with her in the embrace of conjugal union. Finally they constitute only one in their children, who are the fruit and the living testimony of their union; for the child is the father and the mother welded in one single being. Can we imagine a more real, more intimate, more perfect union than this? "Therefore," the Saviour goes on, "now they are not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." What admirable philosophy in these words! These two beings have been made for each other; their hearts, their conduct, their mutual vows have so affirmed. They have joined their lives by the same fireside, in the complete gift of self; they have riveted their two existences to each other in the mingling of their souls and their blood. And should man's caprice be enough to efface all this? And, were it so, would it be possible for each of the two spouses to resume possession, on separating, of all that each had given? In this breaking of the

conjugal tie would there not be irreparable damage done? Would not that very child, the living union of them who would thus be parted, protest, by his misfortune and as an interesting victim, against the iniquitous separation that would divide his heart, endanger his future, and isolate his life?

Whatever argument may be brought to its support, divorce, being but the dissolving of the most sacred union —the act of the man who divides himself and casts off one-half of his own being—shall always be, for the truly wise, an act contrary to nature. More powerful than all the sophistry of passion, the interests of the family, the good order of society, the very nature of things should cry aloud in attestation of this truth.

The teaching of the new Master is therefore more severe than that of the old doctors of Israel. He finds the reasons that sustain it not in collections of civil ordinances, but in the sacred book of natural law, which is the human heart. It is not for one people, nor for one epoch, but for all mankind and for all times that Jesus formulates His doctrine. He knows no exception to that which the Creator's wisdom has ordained according to the very essence of things; and if there has been any derogation from this providential legislation, He Himself has come to re-establish it in its entirety.

This language could surprise only those who had never heard the Master discuss these delicate questions. The disciples knew long since to what they must adhere.[10] Far from being disconcerted, however, the Pharisees at once press upon Him an objection that is somewhat natural: "Why then," they ask Him, "did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away?" Their allegation

[10] Cf. the Sermon on the Mount, *St. Matt.* v, 31, where this question had already been treated.

had a certain falsity which could not escape the Master's divine sagacity, and a certain impertinence that merited a severe retort. Moses did not *command*, he *permitted* [11] the putting away of the wife. His command concerned the conditions for procuring a divorce, in order to render it less frequent. As for divorce itself, he permits it to continue as an abuse which existed before him, and which he dares not suppress, through fear of producing a greater evil. Against a right universally accorded to man, he could not advantageously introduce into his legislation anything more than an obstacle, and he has done this in exacting the certificate of repudiation. This had to be given in writing; and as the husband was most usually unlettered, some man of the law, a scribe, was officially called in. With the authority which his knowledge, his character, his experience conferred upon him, this latter was enabled to attempt to restore peace in the unfortunate household. In any case, the many steps which the husband was obliged to take, required time, and allowed the first heat of anger to cool. Finally, by the very fact that he signed the bill of divorce, he renounced all right to the woman whom he repudiated. She was free to become the wife of another, without fear of legal complaint. All scandalous contests were suppressed for the future. Therefore Moses had neglected nothing to render divorce less frequent, and its consequences less disastrous. To attempt more would have been to expose the woman to frequent abuse and even to endanger her life, whenever the marriage yoke became intolerable to her angered husband. By accepting Moses' toleration as a precept, the Pharisees

[11] When they asked the question in *St. Mark* x, 4, they had spoken more correctly, and Moses, according to them, had only *permitted* (ἐπέτρεψεν). In formulating this objection in *St. Matt.* xix, 7, they pretend that Moses has *commanded* (ἐνετείλατο). This change reveals the malice of the objection.

prove that they have not understood the spirit of his legislation.

"Because Moses," exclaimed Jesus, "by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so." The whole reason for this condescension on the part of the great Lawgiver, since they wish to know it, lies in their malice. The New Law, which now becomes the law of the future, shall pay no thought to those of evil heart, but shall be occupied solely with those good souls to whom it is enough to disclose the providential order that they may have, in spite of all, the courage to comply with it. "And I say to you," the Master added, "that whosoever, even [12] though

[12] This interpretation is not derived, any more than the others, from the commonly accepted text. The best manuscripts have μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ; and why, instead of understanding εἰ μή, should we not say: μὴ καὶ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ? The parallel passages in St. Mark and in St. Luke admit no exception to the indissolubility of marriage—and this would seem decisive. The teaching of St. Paul is explicit on this point. The most ancient doctrine of the Roman Church has never varied, notwithstanding the embarrassing text of St. Matthew. Her greatest reason was that the very conclusion of Our Lord's theological and moral considerations on the institution and primitive essence of marriage, logically led to absolute indissolubility. Everything, therefore, seems to forbid any possible exception. But, the text being given as we have it, is there any means of getting rid of that exception other than that which is proposed above? To say that Jesus here authorises the simple separation of bodies is neither according to the evident meaning of His words, nor in keeping with the history of Christianity which has admitted other grounds for separation besides fornication. To admit that there is here a most ancient interpolation inspired by a conciliatory disposition and through fear of a law apparently too rigorous, is certainly not impossible, and the three words in question have indeed the appearance of this, but such procedure is at all times violent, especially when not a single variation is found suppressing the whole passage. It is true, nevertheless, that there are many changes in the different versions. (See Hug, *De Indissol. Matrim. Vinc.*) Finally, to suppose that Jesus Christ gave the Jews a mitigated doctrine in admitting before them an exception which He particularly suppressed before His disciples, as some would conclude from St. Mark's text, seems to be scarcely in harmony with the Master's courageous frankness. The suppression of the καί after μή, on the part of the copyist, may be accounted for by the resemblance between the monosyllables καί and ἐπί, which a copyist might have confounded. In any hypothesis, we must understand a word which completely changes the meaning of the

it be for fornication, shall put away his wife and shall marry another, committeth adultery." Such is the New Law, which is only a restoration of the primitive law. God alone can by death separate that which in His wisdom He had destined to remain indissolubly united. Marriage, so long dishonoured, shall thus regain all its holiness and its grandeur. If the Pharisees desired to know the Master's mind, they have just heard it fully spoken. Jesus offers no conciliatory policy either to Hillel or to Schammaï; He is opposed to both and for God alone. Many will think such perfection in marriage impossible; but He knows that by His grace His faithful will attain to it. From the generous sacrifice of both spouses, destined henceforth to bear with each other in patience, remaining, in spite of everything, indissolubly united, shall spring the Christian family with its true grandeur, its purity, and its harmonious development. The absolute indissolubility of marriage may be an evil for some, but it is a benefit to the great majority. This is enough to insure its maintenance.

The severity of these last words of the Master, which suppressed every cause of divorce, seemed strange even to His disciples. When they were again with Him in the house where He lodged, they began to question Him for further enlightenment. Jesus simply replied: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." As a matter of fact, the Jewish law did not admit the latter hypothesis. It gave the woman the right to act only indirectly in order to obtain a divorce; but the

negative μή. Why not add καί after μή, instead of putting εἰ before it? There is nothing to sustain the latter addition, which creates a notable divergency between St. Matthew and the two Synoptics; there is every reason for adopting the first, which restores perfect harmony between the Evangelist and the most true and rational teaching of Christianity.

pagan customs of Greece and Rome had begun to be introduced [13] into Judea. Salome had been known to send her bill of divorce to her first husband Costobar, and Herodias had abandoned Philip to marry Antipas. Jesus was intent, therefore, on making it understood that the indissolubility of the conjugal tie was not only for the advantage of the wife, but that it could be also for the interest of the husband, if corrupt times and a lofty position should ever afford a guilty woman privileges as great as her immorality.

With increased astonishment the disciples exclaimed: "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry!" They thought they spoke a paradox. Jesus accepts their exclamation as a truth of which He constitutes Himself advocate, while He declares it impracticable for the greater number. "All men take not this word," He said, "but they to whom it is given." For the vast majority of the human race feel themselves called to the married state, and the thought of the grave worries that this state induces cannot deter them from it. Providence has so willed it to insure the preservation and the increase of the human species. As a counter-weight to the serious outlook of fatherhood, God has placed in man's heart a sentiment powerful enough to disguise all the worries of the future: this is love's hunger, the desire of renewed life in another self, and hence that amazing instinct that grasps the entire human being and impels him unconsciously to a heroic life of sacrifice and devotion. The cry of nature is so strong that only three classes of men resist it with diverse merit. "For," says Jesus, "there are eunuchs, who were born so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs, who were made so by men; and there are

[13] Josephus, *Antiq.*, xv, 7, 10.

eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven. He that can take, let him take it!"

The first are they to whom nature has denied all the physical or moral aptitudes for the married state, hearts without affection, lives without expansion, dormant waters that no breath can agitate, and who live and die without excitement and without beauty. They embrace celibacy by temperament, unaware of any sacrifice, when they do not mean, thereby, to devote themselves to their own selfish interests.

The second are condemned to this sad lot in spite of themselves. Society has imposed its exactions on them; it reduces to impotency their most ardent aspirations. They champ the bit which they must endure. Their life is a meritless pain, and their chastity is in danger of becoming a state of perpetual impurity. Such is the lot of the many youths whom a nation keeps under arms, or to whom the thoughts of a great future forbid the immediate thoughts of marriage, not to speak of those whom caprice, jealousy, or the speculation of men have cruelly mutilated.

Finally, there is the third, and to them alone does Jesus wish to call His disciples' attention, who have hearts, veins, souls full of life. Earth invites them to the most lawful pleasures and to the noblest hopes. Nature holds out to them the pacific sceptre of fatherhood, the sweet joys of family life, and the opportunity still of affording great examples of virtue in the holiness of matrimony. They have questioned heaven, and, in the depths of their soul, God's voice has responded to them that they were to reserve themselves, in a supreme immolation, for Him alone. At once the dear dreams of youth fled away, the hopes of the future expired. Their blood cries out in vain. The will lays hold upon the sacrificial knife, and, needing not the barbarous courage of the Orient, it cuts to the

quick, and with the word, which is a vow, it severs half the man, and henceforth life affords him for consolation only spiritual affection; for fruitfulness, only a supernatural fatherhood that begets souls; for a purpose, only the hope of glorifying God. After the bloody sacrifice which of old our fathers offered to their divinities, there is none grander, more painful than this. It was required that the Master Himself should provoke it, that mankind might venture to present it. With what discretion Jesus speaks of it here, after having begun by practising it Himself! And lo, for eighteen centuries a legion of young heroes ever renewed suffer not the Evangelical counsels to fall to the ground. They show to the world what an energetic faith can do, and to the Church what the man who has taken the vow of virginity can undertake for her glory.

He Who proposed to a few this terrible immolation, and Who furnished an example of it Himself, was not, however, a man without a heart. Voluntary chastity does not kill the sensitiveness of the heart, it develops it, and no one is more delicately tender than he whose purity preserves and guides all his affections.

He was well understood by those pious women, who at once crowded around the young Master, asking Him to bless their children. They had no fear of finding Him too far above their maternal demands.[14] Could He Who had spoken so well of marriage, of its grandeur and its sanctity, refuse a benevolent smile to the young family which

[14] At this point the Synoptics once more agree. St. Matthew (xix, 3) and St. Mark (x, 2) place the question on divorce at the moment when they were entering Perræa. St. Luke (xvi, 18), having found only a word on this question in the documents at his disposal, has located it haphazard, like almost all the fragments from the middle of this chapter as far as xviii, 15, without seeking to attach it to an incident of which he knew nothing. These breaks in continuity and the appearance of disorder found in *St. Luke* are a proof of his conscientious accuracy.

was its fruit? They hastened, therefore, in crowds from all directions. The Jews believed that for a prophet and a just man to impose his hands on a little child was ever a presage of happy days. Although this young generation has not been able to hear the Messiah's words, at least let it receive the influence of His grace through His loving touch.

The disciples, concluding that this outbreak of devotion is ill-timed, are angered at the importunate people and make an effort to repel them. How little they comprehend the Master's inexhaustible benevolence! He is pained at this, and in His displeasure He reproves them: "Suffer the little children," He says, "and forbid them not to come to Me, for the Kingdom of Heaven is for such. Amen, I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it." In these little beings He beholds born-citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom; beneath the candid grace of their young brows, He contemplates the goodness of their souls, and in their artless simplicity, in their filial confidence, He salutes faith and humility, the two virtues that open the gates of heaven. And so He reminds the disciples, by the way, that, to be saved, they must become as little children. The latter do not argue with their father; they believe, they hope, they love.

And, as He spoke, Jesus took into His arms these living images of believing souls. He blessed them tenderly, and, to the great joy of their fathers and mothers, bestowed upon them His choicest favours.

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